
Gautama The Buddha

and

Karl Marx



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AND
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A Critique and Comparative Study of their
Systems of Philosophy

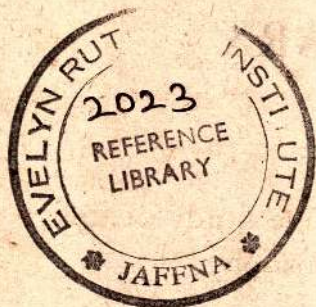
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LEUKE.



IN LIEU OF AN INTRODUCTION

(1)

THE considerable interest evinced in Buddhism today merits a close analysis of its ideological attitude, such as its interpretation of life and its ethical viewpoint. We should, however, endeavour to view Buddhism in the light of conditions and circumstances obtaining today. Buddhism must direct its attention TO THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF OUR AGE. For it is only by doing so will the Buddha Dhamma not merely enjoy a reputation in philosophy and a prestige derived from its historical associations but also exercise an influence on human affairs today.

Another important reason for an analytical survey of Buddhism today is for purpose of comparison. Throughout the world the philosophical viewpoint of Marxism, better known as DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM, rivets attention. Among its claims to recognition is the fact that it constitutes the philosophical basis of a new civilisation which has sprung up in the vast territories of Soviet Russia. Claiming to be scientific, Dialectical Materialism has acquired a sufficiently wide influence on contemporary thought as to merit the close attention of the intellectual world. A comparison of Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism therefore is most opportune.

Such a comparative survey, which we will now endeavour to make, will in so far as it appertains to Buddhism be largely confined to the HINAYANA

system of Buddhist thought, as distinct from MAHAYANA Buddhism, a later development of Buddhist philosophy, which spread from India to China, Japan and Tibet. The Hinayana system of Buddhism obtains today in Ceylon, Burma and Siam. Referring to Hinayana Buddhism, Mrs. Rhys Davids in her book on Buddhism published by the Home University Library says, "That which we have seen called the Lower Vehicle (Hinayana), but which should with greater propriety, be called by its more ancient name of the Theravada, or school of the Elders or Apostles, IS BY ALL ADMITTED TO BE THE PARENT STEM." In confining our attention to Hinayana Buddhism therefore we intend, as far as possible, to deal with the Buddha Dhamma in its pristine purity.

Our contemporary analysis of Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism will be in accordance with what has now become a conventional classification of philosophical problems. We will first of all deal with the problem of REALITY, of what constitutes reality according to both systems of thought. This problem of the nature of REALITY is known as the ONTOLOGICAL problem in philosophy and embraces such topics as MATTER and MIND, the PERMANENCE or the IMPERMANENCE of matter and mind and the problem of GOD.

Closely connected with this ontological problem is the question of how we comprehend reality. We will have to indicate man's capacity for knowledge. This particular investigation has a special name in philosophy, it is known as the EPISTEMOLOGICAL problem.

Finally, we will have to deal with the problem of ETHICS and MORALITY as understood by both systems of thought. Ethics or right conduct is fundamentally based on our conception of REALITY or the ONTOLOGICAL PROBLEM. For it is essentially belief in what is real and what isn't real which sets a VALUE on any particular mode of conduct.

Our comparative study of Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism will therefore deal with the philosophical problems of Ontology, Epistemology, Ethics, and Morality.

THE WORLD OF PROCESSES

(2)

BOTH Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism consider nature to be constituted of PROCESSES. Everything in nature is in a state of flux. Here is a basic identity in both systems of thought which differentiates both systems from the many philosophies and religions which postulate something permanent whether, it be God, a Divine Absolute, or a Soul. Reality, says Dialectical Materialism, is composed of interdependent, interconnected processes. Thus Lenin in his important work "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" which is a very substantial contribution to the subject of Marxist philosophy says, "The recognition of immutable elements, of the immutable substance of things and so forth is not materialism but metaphysical *i.e.* anti-dialectical materialism." Later on in the same chapter he says, "The opinions expressed by Bogdonov in 1899 regarding the immutable essence of things, the opinion of Valentinov regarding SUBSTANCE are similar fruits of ignorance of Dialectics."

Buddhism attaches a similar importance to the unconditional rejection of anything static or permanent in nature. The doctrine of impermanence is a fundamental conception of Buddhism. Rhys Davids in his article on Buddhism in the Encyclopaedia Britannica says, "The First in the collection of the Dialogues of Gautama discusses and completely, categorically and systematically rejects all the current

theories about SOULS. Later books follow this precedent." In the *Milinda Prasna*, which contains discussions between the Greek king Menander and the teacher Nagasena, it is the question of the absence of a permanent entity such as the soul which is taken up first. In the *Anguttara Nikaya* III. 134 the Buddha says, "Whether Perfect Ones (Buddhas) appear in the world, or whether Perfect Ones do not appear in the world, it still remains a firm condition, an immutable fact and fixed law that all formations are impermanent (ANICCA); that all formations are subject to unsatisfactoriness (DUKKA); that all formations are without ego (ANATTA). Again, in the *Samyutta Nikaya* 16 (10) the Buddha says, "A corporeal phenomenon, a feeling, a perception, a mental formation, a consciousness, that is permanent and persistent, eternal and not subject to change, such a thing the wise men in this world do not recognise; and I also say there is no such thing."

The Buddhist conception of processes in nature therefore is contained in the two words ANATTA and ANICCA. Anatta literally means non-ego, the absence of ATMAN or that entity in living beings which survives after death and which according to Hinduism ultimately merges in the ABSOLUTE (BRAHMAN). Anatta therefore really means soullessness. According to Buddhism there is nothing immortal in a human being. Closely connected with Anatta is ANICCA which means transientness or impermanence. Everything in nature is subject to the law of change. The river, for example, ceases to be the same river for the water of which it is composed at any moment passes on and a fresh flow of water takes its place.

Life too at any moment manifests this law of change. Science has established the fact that the cells in any living being are being continually destroyed and replaced by other cells, a process known as METABOLISM.

Movement and change can be detected in even the most infinitesimal of natural phenomena known to modern physics. The electrons of any atom are in constant motion. They revolve so violently that they often jump their orbit and there is frequent interchange of electrons between neighbouring atoms. The result being that the electrons of an atom which remain after such a leap has taken place may re-group themselves to form an atom of a new kind or may disintegrate altogether. The law of change is inherent in nature.

Dialectical Materialism could readily accept this Buddhist doctrine of Anicca and Anatta, for its conception of the Universe is as we have pointed out one of PROCESSES. It, however, postulates that though change is inherent in nature, and nature consists of processes, nevertheless a process at any given stage could have a particular INDIVIDUALITY of its own. For a process does not merely consist of a number of fleeting elements but also consists of a particular ARRANGEMENT of these elements. This particular arrangement of the elements of a process gives the process a particular individuality or quality. For, though the elements which go to compose the process may continually disappear and others take its place, nevertheless the particular ARRANGEMENT of these fleeting elements could persist for a period of time. A particular arrangement of a

process may or may not last a long time, need not even last a lifetime, but so long as it does last it connotes an individuality which temporarily persists. Such a viewpoint can be quite in harmony with that of Buddhism for as Anagarika Govinda in his book, "Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy" tells us "The anatta idea does not proclaim that there is no self but that there is no permanent self."

The doctrine of impermanence therefore constitutes a basic identity of viewpoint between Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism.

THE NATURE OF PROCESSES

(3)

WE have pointed out that both Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism consider nature to be constituted of PROCESSES.

Dialectical Materialism classifies these processes into MATERIAL processes and MENTAL processes, and to appreciate the significance of this classification it is necessary to acquaint ourselves with a very important problem in philosophy, namely, the issue between Idealism and Materialism.

Take the case of an ordinary square table. We experience certain sensations in regard to it ; sensations of brownness, hardness, squareness, etc., etc. Such sensations are mental qualities and are part of the mental process. Now is there nothing in what we consider to be the table besides these mental qualities or are these mental qualities stimulated by and do they reflect, something material *i.e.* some process external to and independent of MIND ? If we accept the existence of any such process external to and independent of mind, and which mind reflects and images in sensation, then we belong to the school of philosophical MATERIALISM. But, if we conclude that the impression of the table is not a reflection or image of an object or more accurately of an objective process external to and independent of mind, then we belong to the school of philosophical idealism.

Bishop Berkeley, one of the best known of the Idealists, in contending that the table is an essentially

mental concept, maintained that it was a bundle of sensations WITHIN THE MIND. It was purely a mental concept, and was therefore either in our minds or in the mind of God. Whenever such sensations as constitute (according to Berkeley) a table are not in our minds, they are at least in the mind of God. There is nothing in the table external to or independent of mind, for nothing in it independent of these sensations of hardness, squareness, etc. could be either logically proved or experienced.

However, the agnostic philosopher HUME completely invalidated Berkeley's argument. For Hume argued that if Berkeley contended that no process of logic or experience could prove the existence of a material process and that the table was only a bundle of sensations WITHIN THE MIND, similarly Berkeley himself could never establish the existence of that REPOSITORY of sensations the MIND and had no right to assume its existence. What then only exists are sensations. Nothing exists but sensations. Here is Berkeley's Idealism taken to its logical conclusion.

Now it is true that there is no logical argument by which we can establish the existence of anything but sensations, which is the philosophical position we have indicated of the sceptic Hume, but of course the materialist position which postulates a world of objective reality *i.e.* a world external to sensation and to mind is the accepted basis of all human conduct. As Lenin said in his "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", "The scientific doctrine of the structure of substance, the chemical composition of food, and the electron may become antiquated

with time ; but the truth that MAN IS UNABLE TO SUBSIST ON THOUGHTS AND BEGET CHILDREN ON PLATONIC LOVE ALONE can never become antiquated." Lenin here asserts that when we breed babies we not only assume the existence of a mental attitude but of an OBJECTIVE marital relationship.

Human behaviour proceeds on a fundamental acceptance of an objective world. Otherwise we will be up against the most extraordinary situations. For example a disciple of Hume who sees a cat first in his bedroom, later in the sitting-room and still later in the garden, but who doesn't see the animal in between, will be in a dilemma. For common-sense tells him that the cat passed in either protracted or immediate stages from the bedroom to the sitting-room and from the sitting-room to the garden. But as he cannot accept the existence of objective reality independent of sensations, its existence cannot be assumed during the period of time that it is not experienced in sensation, so that its behaviour must be a series of spasmodic jumps which enables the cat to be seen in the bedroom, sitting-room and garden CONSECUTIVELY. Instead of accepting such a phantasy Dialectical Materialism postulates the existence of objective reality or material process, in this particular case the cat, which is EXTERNAL TO AND INDEPENDENT OF MIND OR THE MENTAL PROCESS.

Dialectical Materialism therefore maintains that nature is composed of MENTAL and MATERIAL processes, in other words a subjective and objective world of processes. By the term MATERIAL processes Dialectical Materialism means nothing more than the

existence of an objective world external to and independent of mind.

Dialectical Materialism vests matter with one property. For, as matter is a process, MOTION is a fundamental attribute of matter. Dialectical Materialism does not bind itself to any other properties of matter such as impenetrability, inertia and mass. The old materialism of the 18th century better known as Mechanical Materialism (which has lost its influence today) took a much more dogmatic attitude regarding the properties of matter and came to be discredited as a result. For instance, Mechanical Materialism postulated that the atom was the basic element in matter only to discover in the twentieth century that the atom was capable of disintegration. Dialectical Materialism merely insists on motion being a fundamental attribute of matter and on matter having "an existence external to and independent of mind. Thus Lenin, in his "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism", tells us, "Properties of matter are disappearing which formerly seemed absolute, immutable and primary (impenetrability, inertia, mass, etc.) and which are now revealed to be relative and characteristic only of certain stages of matter."

Buddhism couldn't be indifferent to this historic philosophical controversy between Idealism and Materialism which has persisted right down the centuries, for the implications of these divergent philosophical viewpoints are far reaching. As a matter of fact, Buddhism does deal with this basic ontological problem. The Theravada or Southern School of Buddhism deals with this problem in that important branch of the Buddha doctrine known as

ABBHIDHAMMA. That Theravada or Hinayana Buddhism does accept the existence of a world EXTERNAL to mind and does not consider all things to be within the mind, is indicated by the fact that the Abhidhamma maintains that consciousness could be stimulated either by an internal source or an external object.

As a matter of fact, the Abhidhamma gives an elaborate account of how an EXTERNAL object could stimulate consciousness. It points out that the external object agitates the sentient organism through what is known as the PANCHA DVARA or the five doors of the senses. Entering through the five doors of the senses it comes into contact with the BHAVANGA SOTA or the subconscious stream of mental life. The impact causes vibration and at the same time impedes the smooth flow of Bhavanga Sota. This damming up of the stream of mental life (A process known as SOTA UPPACHEDA) does not negative mental energy but transforms it from a potential state to a state of activity, resulting in any one of the eleven following forms of mental activity :—

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| (1) Avajjana- | ... | to become aware |
| (2) Dassana | ... | seeing |
| (3) Savana | ... | hearing |
| (4) Ghayana | ... | smelling |
| (5) Sayana | ... | tasting |
| (6) Phusana | ... | touching |
| (7) Sampaticchana | ... | receiving |
| (8) Santirana | ... | investigating |
| (9) Votthappana | ... | determining |
| (10) Javana | ... | apperception |
| (11) Tadarammana | ... | identifying, registering |

In pointing to the EXTERNAL OBJECT which agitates the sentient organism, the Theravada school of Buddhism postulates the existence of OBJECTIVE REALITY, of a world of OBJECTIVE PROCESSES, OF PROCESSES EXTERNAL TO MIND.

Now, although the Theravada form of Buddhism, which as we have pointed out, may be considered the earliest exposition of Buddhist doctrine and therefore perhaps the most authentic, postulated the existence of processes external to mind, it is interesting to note how, with the passage of centuries and with the development of the Mahayana system of Buddhism, this older viewpoint underwent a process of change until an undiluted, idealistic position in philosophy was finally reached, whenever and wherever the Mahayana system of Buddhism came to be accepted. Let us very briefly trace the history of this change-over to idealism in Buddhist thought so far as it occurred in India, as here in Ceylon the older Hinayana system was never ousted by Mahayana doctrines and even now continues to flourish in much of its pristine purity.

Two of the most important schools of Hinayana Buddhism in India, which dealt with this basic ontological problem of objective reality were the VAIBHASIKA school and the SAUTRANTIKA school. The Vaibhasika school, whose chief exponent was a person by the name of Dinnaga, maintained that COGNITION is produced by what is termed SVALAKSANAS and SAMANA-LAKSANAS. Sva-Laksanas are elements in objective reality and are therefore the contribution of objective reality to any particular concept. Samana-Laksanas are purely mental cate-

gories which have no existence in objective reality, but which nevertheless combine with the *sva-laksanas* to form a concept. The cognition of objective reality therefore, according to this school, need not correspond with actual objective reality as in addition to the *sva-laksanas* of objective reality subjective, *samana-laksanas* or mental categories are also embodied in the concept. But, in as much as the *Vaibhasika* school of Buddhism postulated the existence of *sva-laksanas*, it postulated the existence of objective reality, as objective reality is deemed to be the source of *sva-laksanas*. Moreover, as it postulated the *KNOWABILITY* of *sva-laksanas* it postulated the knowability of objective reality. This *Vaibhasika* school of Buddhism therefore accepted the existence and knowability of objective reality *i.e.* of a world of processes external to mind.

We now come to the *SAUTRANTIKA* SCHOOL of Buddhism, said to have been founded by *Kumara-labdha* in A. D. 200. The *Sautrantika* school, like the *Vaibhasikas*, postulated the existence of *sva-laksanas* and therefore the existence of objective reality. It, however, differed from the *Vaibhasika* school in regard to the perception of these *sva-laksanas*, and to understand its position one has to be aware of the Buddhist theory of the momentariness of all things, which is a feature of the Buddhist doctrine of *Anicca*. According to this doctrine of momentariness, a thing which seems to last for sometime is in reality a quick succession of similar things. A representation of any person in a film is a good illustration of this Buddhist viewpoint. For so long as the representa-

tion lasts on the screen it appears to us as being identically the same picture of the person, but in actual reality it is a very quick succession of similar pictures which produces the illusion of being one and the same picture of the person. The Buddhist doctrine of the momentariness of all formations is based on a similar conception. The Sautrantika school, by placing special emphasis on this doctrine of momentariness, contended that by the time an IMPRESSION of a sva-laksana reaches our consciousness, that particular sva-laksana has already disappeared in objective reality, and whatever impressions of sva-laksanas therefore are present in consciousness at any time are in reality impressions of past sva-laksanas. They relate to a particular objective reality which did exist but which has disappeared. The Sautrantika school therefore postulated a difference in time, although a momentary difference between the operation of sva-laksanas in objective reality and the impression of such sva-laksanas in our minds.

The Vaibhasika school, on the other hand, maintained that a sva-laksana and its impression in the mind are contemporaneous. But despite this divergence it is important to emphasise the fact that both the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika schools of Buddhist philosophy postulated THE EXISTENCE OF A REALITY EXTERNAL TO MIND.

A change in viewpoint, however, on this fundamental ontological problem emerged with the development of the Mahayana system of Buddhism, and an important Mahayana school of philosophical Idealism which developed in India was the YOGACARA school. Its

chief expositors were Asanga and Vasubandhu who lived in the third century A. D. The Yogacaras refused to accept the reality of anything external to mind, considering our supposed experience of objective reality to be in no way different to our experience of persons and objects in dreams where the whole process is within the mind, and nothing exists external to mind. Reality, according to the Yogacara school, is therefore essentially SUBJECTIVE.

The Madhyamika school of Buddhism went further than the Yogacara school in that it not only denied objective reality but for all purposes it seemed to have denied subjective reality as well. It maintained that a quest of knowledge in regard to matters of common experience only leads to a blind alley. Knowledge of matters of common experience resolves itself according to this school into a farrago of contradictions, indicating that although from the point of view of our empirical life we speak of knowing things, from a strictly philosophical point of view there is no justification for such a statement.

We therefore see that Buddhist thought in India under the influence of the Mahayana system wandered away from the objective realism of the Hinayana tradition, became basically idealistic in its viewpoint, and in the case of the Madhyamika school found itself upholding a viewpoint which could even be described as nihilistic.

However, the system of Buddhism which mainly interests us in this work is the Hinayana system which obtains in Ceylon, and its basic viewpoint regarding the reality of an objective world, a world external to mind should be noted.

It is relevant to indicate in this connection that seven thought moments (CITTAKHANA) are accepted in Hinayana Buddhism as the duration of MATERIAL phenomena. Anagarika Govinda, in his book on early Buddhist Philosophy commenting on this says, "Therefore it follows THAT THE MATERIAL ALSO BECOMES ONLY A SPECIFIC CASE OF PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE AND ACCORDINGLY IS ADMITTED TO THE GROUP OF THE ELEMENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS". Now the deduction that the material becomes only a specific case of the psychic in Buddhism, may give the impression that the matter and mind are qualitatively the same thing according to Buddhism. This, of course, is an unjustifiable conclusion to draw. Govinda's deduction proceeds from his earlier observation that seven thought moments (CITTAKHANA) are accepted as the duration of material phenomena. But this is only to establish a RELATIONSHIP between mind and matter, which of itself does not make mind and matter one and the same thing, for relationship does not mean identity. The reason therefore why matter has been discussed in Buddhism solely in relation to consciousness is not because Buddhism considers matter and mind to be qualitatively identical, but because Buddhism is solely concerned with the SUBJECTIVE problem of Dukkha or unsatisfactoriness, to which living beings are subject and its extinction. Any speculation which does not lead to this end is considered by Buddhism to be perfectly futile. Now the development of the mind is according to Buddhism necessary for the extinction of Dukkha. The problem of matter hasn't got anything like the same importance. Buddhism is therefore

only interested in the problem of matter indirectly, as something related to the problem of consciousness. But this is not to assume that Buddhism denies the existence of processes qualitatively different to mind, processes external to mind and constituting objective reality.

As a matter of fact the Abhidhamma goes to the extent of analysing this objective reality external to mind into certain basic properties. These are PATHAVI-extension, APO-cohesion, TEJO-heat (Radiation) and VAYO-motion. It is interesting to note that both Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism have VAYO-motion as a basic attribute of objective reality. Dialectical Materialism vests objective reality with no other fundamental attributes. For, as we have already stated, it remembers the fact that the mechanical materialism of the 18th century gave an elaborate analysis of objective reality, deeming its basic elements to be composed of atoms, only to be disproved by subsequent scientific research.

However, in classifying processes into mental processes (NAMA)* and processes external to mind (RUPA), Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism adopt a similar viewpoint.

But, in regard to the relationship of the objective process to the mental process or the relationship of matter to mind, Buddhism in so far as this world of ours is concerned† denies the possibility of

* Buddhism classifies mind into 52 mental states-Vedana or feeling (pleasure, pain, neutral feeling) is one, Sanna or preception (Recognising and naming) is another. The remaining fifty mental states are collectively called Sankhara or volitional activities. These mental states arise in Vinnana or consciousness.

† There are certain Realms called Arupaloka where Buddhists believe that mind exists without matter.

existence of mind without matter. The position is succinctly put by Nyanatiloka Maha-Thera in his interesting little brochure entitled "ESSENCE OF THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING." He says, "Buddhism does not recognise in this world any permanent existence of even mind without matter. "All mental phenomena are conditioned through the six ORGANS OF SENSE....." and immediately after he concludes, "According to Buddhism MIND WITHOUT MATTER IS AN IMPOSSIBILITY".

Dialectical Materialism emphatically denies the possibility of existence of mind without matter. It even goes further, for it postulates an origin of mind in matter, mind being produced by a development and particular integration of matter. This, however, does not mean that according to Dialectical Materialism mind is entirely conditioned by matter, for Dialectical Materialism maintains that though mind originates from matter and is the result of a development and particular integration of matter, nevertheless, once mind comes into existence it has the power to influence matter. Thus, though Dialectical Materialism maintains that the ethical outlook of most people is influenced by their social environment, it does not deny the possibility of INDIVIDUALS, by a process of mental discipline, ethically rising above environmental influences-as for instance a member of the capitalist class working for Socialism. Moreover, Dialectical Materialism vests man with the mental capacity to analyse his environment and to CHANGE his environment as a result of such analysis. So that, according to Dialectical Materialism, once mind comes into existence, mind can really influence matter just as

matter influences mind. It is therefore incorrect to say that Dialectical Materialism debases mind, rendering it perfectly passive. Nevertheless, Dialectical Materialism is fundamentally a materialist philosophy in as much as it postulates (A) that matter is an objective reality independent of mind; (B) that mind is a product of matter; (C) that the thought process of man and the problems to which he directs his energies are basically stimulated or provoked by his MATERIAL environment.

Let us end this chapter by emphasising certain similarities of viewpoint which we have so far found in Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism. Both systems of thought deny any permanent SUBSTANCE in nature. Both systems of thought classify processes into subjective and objective processes, into processes which are mental in their nature and processes which are external to mind and which are reflected in consciousness. Buddhism sees no possibility IN THIS WORLD of mind existing without matter. Dialectical Materialism considers the existence of mind without matter to be an impossibility. Dialectical Materialism, however, goes further. It postulates that the material process, by its development and particular integration produced the mental process.

THE DIALECTICAL PATTERN

(4)

THE manner in which processes undergo change and development is dealt with exhaustively in Dialectical Materialism. For, Dialectical Materialism maintains that all processes whether in physical nature, in living beings or in human society, develop according to a certain pattern which is known as the DIALECTICAL PATTERN. This is the reason why the philosophical materialism of Marxism is known as DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM. This pattern, according to which processes change and develop, is one of the most important aspects of Marxism. We will therefore have to deal with it in some detail if we are to provide an adequate picture of Dialectical Materialism.

The essence of the dialectical method of thought is the recognition of the fact that all processes whether mental or material, contain CONTRADICTIONS. Now, to say that a thing is and is NOT at the same time sounds at first illogical. This is because we view things as being static. But, if we look at them as we should, namely as PROCESSES *i.e.* as forms of activity, then contradictions become intelligible. For processes are not only composed of features which contribute to a particular kind of activity, but are also SIMULTANEOUSLY and INHERENTLY composed, in varying degrees, of features which do not contribute to that particular kind of activity. Processes therefore manifest inherently contradictory features in their forms of activity. For instance,

let us take the case of mere mechanical motion or change of place as illustrated by a flying arrow. At each moment of time in the flight of the arrow it occupies a given position and is at a particular place. For, to eliminate the occupation of a position at any particular moment from our concept of motion is to eliminate the object in motion, as an object occupies a position in space, however momentary, is its existence. But to say that motion only consists in the occupation of positions is not correct. For the occupation of a position considered by itself involves a break in motion. Motion, therefore, simultaneously with the occupation of positions involves a process which cannot be said to contribute to that particular activity of occupying a position, namely a non-occupation of that position. As Engels in his "Anti-Duhring" says, "Even simple mechanical change of place can only come about through a body at one and the same time being both in one place and in another place, being in one and the same place and also not in it. And the continuous assertion and simultaneous solution of this contradiction is what motion is."

Let us take a higher form of a process, namely life. Life too is based on a contradiction. For the cells of a living being are in constant process of disappearing and being replaced by other cells, a process known as metabolism. Before long a complete change of cells has taken place, and we might say, that a new being is in existence. But we know at the same time that there is a certain continuing individuality in the life process which we have already discussed in another connection. So that life contains a basic contradiction. For it not only involves the

functioning of a PARTICULAR being, but it also includes a process which does not contribute to the particularity of this being, namely the process of metabolism. Engels in his "Anti-Duhring" tells us, "If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of the higher forms of motion and especially of organic life and its development. Life consists just precisely in this, that a living being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is also therefore a contradiction which is present in things and processes and which constantly asserts itself and solves itself, and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life too comes to an end and death steps in."

Let us take a still higher aspect of a process namely consciousness and knowledge. Here again the content of human knowledge is contradictory in its nature. The human race has an unlimited faculty of knowledge, in the sense that the human race will continue to acquire knowledge without its capacity for knowledge reaching an ultimate limit at some point in time. But, as knowledge is acquired PROGRESSIVELY, the realisation of knowledge is limited by considerations of time. For example, people in the future who would have our knowledge and experience to start with should be able to acquire more knowledge than we should possess in our life time. Knowledge in this sense is limited by considerations of TIME. So that knowledge which involves the activity of unlimited human comprehension, also involves a feature which cannot be said to contribute to this activity, namely a limitation in point of time. Engels, in his "Anti-Duhring" says, "We likewise see that also in the sphere of thought

we could not avoid contradictions and the contradiction between man's inherent unlimited faculty of knowledge and its actual realisation in men who are limited by their external conditions etc. etc." Contradictions, therefore, are perfectly natural phenomena if we consider nature as we should, namely in terms of PROCESSES. For processes whether mechanical or otherwise, are not only composed of features which contribute to a particular activity but are also simultaneously and inherently composed of features which do not contribute to that particular activity.

Let us appreciate the significance of the viewpoint that contradictions are inherent in processes and that a UNITY OF OPPOSITES is therefore a vital feature of processes. Dialectical Materialism maintains that this unity of opposites or the existence of contradictions IS THE DYNAMIC FORCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROCESS. It is the basic cause of the coming into existence of the QUALITATIVELY NEW in the process. In the development of a process we usually come across development which is normal and gradual. Dialectical Materialism calls this a quantitative development, the process maintaining a particular identity throughout. But suddenly we come across what could best be described as a leap in the process, the result of which is that the process suddenly loses the particular identity which characterised it and takes on a qualitatively new form or aspect. The quantitative development of the process suddenly produces a qualitative change, or to use the phraseology of Dialectical Materialism there is a change of quantity into quality. The

classic example of a change of quantity into quality in physical nature is the change from ice into water. As J. D. Bernal in an essay, "Aspects of Dialectical Materialism" says "here we have a rigid crystalline body on the one hand and a fluid amorphous body on the other, typically qualitatively different. The process of change from ice to water is brought about by heat. The crude view is that it is heat that gives the qualities of fluidity and internal regularity to water. But, if we add heat to ice we do not in fact observe with the gradual addition of heat any lack of rigidity and crystallinity until a specific point when both disappear suddenly together to be replaced by the fluidity of water. Here we have sudden qualitative change brought about by a simple quantitative change of the mean energy of the molecules. Transformations of this type are found all through the organic and inorganic world. Take evolution. Darwin's theory of evolution was a matter of continuous imperceptible variation, now it appears as GENETIC MUTATIONS." This sudden leap in the otherwise gradual development of the process, this sudden coming into existence of the qualitatively NEW is the result of CONTRADICTIONS in the process, the existence of an unity of opposites and the intensification of these contradictions. In other words, contradictions at a certain stage and in certain circumstances create tension within the process and out of this tension qualitative changes arise.

The SOCIAL process, viewed historically, affords excellent examples of qualitative development resulting from contradictions in the economic activity of social forms. But this takes us to a special branch of

Marxism, namely HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, which contains sufficient scope and material for a historical treatise, and cannot therefore be dealt with in this brief work which confines itself strictly to philosophical problems. Suffice it to state that according to Historical Materialism, the various types of society which have developed from a primitive COMMUNAL SYSTEM such as SLAVE SOCIETY, FEUDAL SOCIETY, CAPITALIST SOCIETY and SOCIALIST SOCIETY are all the product of social CONTRADICTIONS which developed within the social forms which preceded each of them. Social contradictions, it should be noted, are produced by economic development, and when these contradictions intensify in degree they cause the sudden emergence of a qualitatively new social form. In a class-stratified society (but not of course in a classless society) social contradictions result in class conflict as an inevitable prelude to the sudden emergence of the qualitatively new social form.

We are now in a position to give a coherent description of the broad outlines of the Dialectical Pattern. Our exposition of the dialectical process commences with the MATERIAL process, which Dialectical Materialists postulate has had no beginning and is subject to endless change and development. But, as matter, according to Dialectical Materialism, has MOTION as an inherent characteristic, it is capable of SELF MOVEMENT, *i.e.* no external agent in the form of an external force is necessary to produce movement in matter. This self movement of matter takes place, not merely in a quantitative sense, for owing to the existence of contradictions in the process (motion

itself being a contradiction) sudden LEAPS in the process take place producing changes in the organisation of matter and resulting in the emergence of the QUALITATIVELY NEW. As already pointed out, LIFE and MIND are just expressions of the qualitatively new arising from the self development of matter. They were always POTENTIALLY present in matter, but once they came into existence as a qualitative reality, they assumed an identity of their own. Consequently, they cannot be dissected back again into basic material elements and cannot therefore be said to be governed by the mechanical or physio-chemical laws of inanimate nature. They are governed by laws of their own. This is why Dialectical Materialism, although it rejects a supernatural world and all it connotes, nevertheless appreciates the existence of spiritual qualities which highly organised matter is capable of developing. Life and Mind not being governed by mechanical or physio-chemical laws are just such spiritual qualities which the material process in certain highly organised stages of its development is capable of producing.

Dialectical Materialists maintain that the dialectical pattern of development, with its notion of inherent contradictions, unity and interpenetration of opposites, and the emergence of the qualitatively NEW, is a universal mode of development, applying to all processes in the universe, whether in physical nature, in the mind or in society. If, therefore, human beings want to act rationally and effectively, they must, according to Dialectical Materialism, make themselves aware of this Dialectical Pattern which characterises

the development of all processes in nature. For though Dialectical Materialism, unlike Mechanical Materialism, considers the mind to be dynamic once it comes into existence and vests mind with will power, it nevertheless maintains that these basic laws of nature (such as the existence of contradictions and the change of quantity into quality), which constitute the Dialectical Pattern, cannot be ignored. Our liberty of action rendered possible by our will must, according to Dialectical Materialism, in the long run harmonise with these basic natural laws. Our liberty of action therefore at any given time, if exercised scientifically, appertains to our ability to study progressively the development of processes, to progressively work out their implications, such as their contradictory nature, and on the basis of such knowledge be in a position to take advantage of them. The dynamic nature of man's mind should enable him to even consciously influence processes once he is aware of their existence and realises their implications, but, so long as he is ignorant of their nature and mode of development, he acts blindly and benightedly, and should be subject to constant frustration.

The recognition of the validity of contradictions in the inherent activity of processes, it will now be evident, is a basic feature of the logic of Dialectical Materialism, widening thereby the conception of logic formulated by Aristotle. For, Aristotelian logic maintains as a cardinal principle that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time. This is only true if a thing is considered to be static, but not if, as Dialectical Materialism maintains, everything in

nature is in movement and nature is composed of interdependent, interconnected processes.

Now, though Buddhism remains silent on the question of the POTENTIALITY of contradictions in producing development, it nevertheless seems to admit the EXISTENCE of contradictions in processes, and in doing so gets much further than most systems of thought in its approximation to Dialectical Materialism. Narada Thera, in his book-“The Buddhist Doctrine of Kamma and Rebirth”-page 92, quotes from Bhikkhu Silacara as follows. “This new being (referring to rebirth) which is the present manifestation of the stream of Kamma energy is not the same as and has no identity with the previous one in its line ; the aggregate which makes up its composition being different from and having no identity with those that make up the being of its predecessor, AND YET IT IS NOT ENTIRELY A DIFFERENT BEING, since it has the same stream of Kamma energy, though modified perchance.....” According to Buddhism therefore rebirth involves a process which negates being while simultaneously it includes an activity which could be said to contribute to its continuity, an essentially contradictory position. Pursuing the same line of thought, Buddhism should also find a contradictory position arising not merely in its conception of rebirth but also in regard to life in any one particular existence as well. For the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness, which we have already referred to, considers the elements of which a being is composed to be of momentary duration, being constantly replaced by elements of a similar nature. Such a posi-

tion may from one point of view be considered a justification for asserting that a being at any given moment is not the same being of a previous moment. But, here the stream of Kamma energy persists, despite fleeting elements, and may be said to preserve continuity in the living process. Life within one existence therefore, according to Buddhism, involves a process which does not contribute to the continuity of being and at the same time involves an activity which contributes to such continuity, an inherently contradictory situation. The logic of contradictions therefore seems not only comprehensible to Dialectical Materialism but to Buddhism as well.

THE
NON-THEISTIC POSITION OF
BUDDHISM
AND
DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

(5)

BUDDHISM and Dialectical Materialism have much in common in their attitude towards the conception of GOD. Although Buddhism avoids metaphysical speculation regarding the beginning and end of all things, nevertheless the Dhamma, as we shall point out, involves a certain attitude towards THEISM which needs to be noticed.

All systems of religious thought which postulate the existence of a supreme being termed GOD, deem it as a necessary and logical consequence to postulate a RELATIONSHIP between God and Man. For instance, prayer is the means whereby Christians establish a personal relationship with God, and Mohammedans with Allah. In Hinduism the DIVINE ABSOLUTE is generally speaking the central theme of thought. Although most schools of Hinduism believe in a law of Kamma *i.e.* a law of conduct and its consequences, a law of action and reaction, nevertheless this Kammic law is considered to be a feature of the moral order which emanates from the ABSOLUTE, whose manifestations are Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Siva the destroyer. The highest form of meditation in Hinduism is the contemplation of the

DIVINE ABSOLUTE and the ultimate goal, according to the most influential schools of Hindu thought, is to finally merge in the ABSOLUTE. Sir Radhakrishnan, the great authority on Indian philosophy, in an article in the Hibbert Journal entitled "The Heart of Hindustan", has this to say about Hinduism. Accepting all forms of worship that prevailed in the country, the Hindu thinkers arranged themselves in a scale leading to the highest form of divine worship, WHICH IS THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD."

Now it seems perfectly reasonable, that once the existence of a DIVINE ABSOLUTE, as in the case of Hinduism, or of a supreme being such as the God of Christianity or Islam is postulated that man should also endeavour to effect a relationship between himself and such a BEING. But, Buddhism completely excludes the necessity of establishing a personal relationship with any such Being. Its highest expression of "Bhavana" or meditation has not the slightest connection with the contemplation of such a Being, nor is its goal the merging of man in such a Being, nor the enjoyment of the visual presence of such a Being. As a matter of fact, an ABSOLUTE BEING, whether it be the DIVINE ABSOLUTE of Hinduism or the Theistic conception of God as postulated by Christianity and Islam, has no place in Buddhist thought.

We have an even more pronounced view on the matter in Mrs. Rhys David's book on Buddhism in the Home University Library Series. She says, "Buddhism, in the Dhamma of the Pitakas, puts aside a theodicy, let us say at once, a theistic position,

and accepts a cosmodicy. The great wheel of cosmic order goes on but it is AKARAKA, i.e. without maker, without known beginning, continuing to exist by virtue of a concatenation of cause and effect. As a notable movement of religious and ethical reform, Buddhism was not unique in being non-theistic. Jainism was not less so; so was the Sankhya. But, without complicating our subject by dragging in these, we may search the Pitakas in vain for any expression, that to have turned away from the support and consolation of theism was felt as an unconscious loss." These lines clearly set forth the NON-THEISTIC position of Buddhism.

Moreover, if the Buddha ever assumed the POSSIBILITY of existence of such a supreme being as God, then his failure to define our relationship with this being becomes incomprehensible. It is true, Buddhism speaks of gods (devas), but they are beings who have no connection with an ABSOLUTE or SUPREME BEING. They are law-governed like the rest of mankind. According to Buddhism, they did not create the world order nor could they destroy it or interfere with it. Thus the Samyutta Nikaya III—85 says, "And just as the king of beasts at eventide comes forth from his lair and roars, so does He (the Buddha) proclaim the norm to gods and men, how all matter and all mind recombines and dissolves again. The gods hear and in anguish explain, 'Alas, we who fancied ourselves permanent, stable, eternal, we are confined by an individuality that is impermanent, unstable, temporary' ". A Deva therefore has no connection with that eternal and supreme being recognised by most religions and termed GOD.

In its non-theistic position, Buddhism finds another similarity of viewpoint with Dialectical Materialism. Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism are two of the very few systems of philosophy which do not assume the existence of God. As a matter of fact, Dialectical Materialism denies the existence of any such being categorically. The Dialectical Materialist, moreover, explains how belief in God first originated. Primitive man, at the beginning of his struggle for existence, was psychologically affected by the vastness and power of nature. The psychological effect of this experience on man was to make natural phenomena around him objects of worship. In a word, he deified diverse natural phenomena, and thus various gods came into existence. But, as natural phenomena became more intelligible, these gods of diverse natural phenomena faded into the background and a single GOD of the vast mysterious universe came into existence. FEAR, therefore *i.e.* fear of the vastness and power of nature produced in men's minds the idea of God. But, this idea of God, once it originated, proved to be very convenient. For the particular ethical code by which human conduct was governed at any stage of social development was deemed to be the ethical code of the supreme deity, and therefore received a special sanction. But, as the idea of God was essentially based on fear, it would, says Dialectical Materialism, have waned in importance with every conquest of nature, if not for another factor, namely man's social environment. Social chaos has produced a feeling of uncertainty and instability, which has grown as much as fear of our physical environment has been on

the wane. The *sensus numinis* or that sense of fear which provokes the idea of God has, according to Dialectical Materialism, received a fresh stimulus in the economic insecurity of life today. Dialectical Materialism therefore considers the idea of God, and the necessity of establishing a relationship with God, an ESCAPE MECHANISM necessitated by man's sense of fear. It consequently denies a divine origin to the Universe and considers MATTER to be without beginning, and to be composed of processes which are subject to endless change and development. In postulating a non-theistic position, both Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism consider man to be the SOLE ARCHITECT OF HIS OWN DESTINY. Man has got the power, according to both systems of thought, of moulding his own destiny independent of divine assistance.

THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

(6)

THE 18th century heralded the beginning of our age of mechanical invention. Mechanical science was then the most developed of the sciences, and the whole universe came to be viewed by scientists MECHANICALLY. Mechanical causation was considered to be a basic feature of all phenomena. One thing followed from another in an inevitable process of cause and effect.

The theory of causation, however, of this mechanical materialism involved a sort of predestination, for it postulated that, given the first cause, the development of the universe on the lines on which it developed was inevitable. There could be no question of an accidental or probable happening. Accident or even probability in nature were completely ruled out. Such a notion denied that man had a WILL of his own, for will connotes a choice of conduct, which is unpredictable, accidental or at most probable, but not inevitable.

Now, in discussing the attitude of Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism to this important problem of causation, it is necessary at the outset to make it quite clear that both these systems of thought do not accept this very RIGID theory of cause and effect postulated by Mechanical Materialism, which goes

to the extent of maintaining that the behaviour of anything is DETERMINED by that which preceded it, so that once the initial cause of a process took place the rest of the process automatically and inevitably had to follow. For both Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism maintain that the behaviour of an effect is not necessarily the PASSIVE result of its immediate cause, and is not a fortiori the passive result of its first cause. Buddhism, for instance, believes in will. For it asserts that man has an inherent capacity to mould his ethical life and could do so if he wills it. Human behaviour, therefore, according to Buddhism, is generally speaking not a passive response to some previous cause but is influenced by will. In accepting this theory of will, operating, as we will see, with certain limitations, Buddhism postulates the existence of a phenomenon in nature whose behaviour can be unpredictable, accidental or probable, and not inevitable.

As already stated, Buddhism imposes limitations on will. For instance, what one wills may, in a particular instance or at a particular time or in other particular circumstances, be an impossibility. Again, volitional conduct in the past, termed Kamma (we will deal with Kamma at length in our next chapter) causes existence and influences existence, and can therefore place us in a condition of life which we would not voluntarily accept.

Dialectical Materialism also asserts that the operation of will has important limitations. For, in addition to physical impossibilities, Dialectical Materialism

maintains that environment influences the ethical conduct of a large majority of human beings. But, in maintaining that particular individuals can ethically rise above their environmental influences, and that scientific knowledge and development can change environment, and that human beings though governed by the dialectical laws of nature can make use of these laws to their best advantage, Dialectical Materialism postulates the operation of will in human conduct. Will, as we have indicated, with its uncertainty of conduct, points to the existence, despite important limitations, of the unpredictable or accidental in nature.

Though Dialectical Materialism and Buddhism, therefore, do not accept the rigid law of cause and effect of Mechanical Materialism, which must maintain that behaviour is wholly determined by a previous cause, (thereby eliminating will) nevertheless, both Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism definitely postulate the operation of a law of cause and effect in nature. For both systems of thought maintain that in the movement of a process a subsequent event proceeds from previous events, in as much as its origins are to be found in the inherent conditions of such previous events. There is no LOGICAL NECESSITY, as understood by Aristotelian logic, why this should be so. Dialectical Materialism does not maintain (nor does Buddhism) that there is any logical necessity why an effect should follow a cause in the way the DEDUCTION:-John is mortal logically follows from the propositions-John is a man-All men are mortal. In fact, such a deduction in logic contains nothing

NEW, as it is in reality contained in the two propositions which preceded it. An EFFECT, in Dialectical Materialism and in Buddhism, on the other hand, unlike a deduction in Aristotelian logic, could be QUALITATIVELY NEW.

We therefore see that Dialectical Materialism and Buddhism maintain that a general law of cause and effect operates in processes, though, as pointed out, this law of cause and effect does not operate with that rigidity which completely excludes the operation of will.

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE

(7)

We have pointed out that Dialectical Materialism considers motion to be inherent in matter. Motion and matter are INSEPARABLE. The fact that motion is an inherent feature of matter enables us to conceive of the SELF MOVEMENT of matter, a conception we have to appreciate, if we are to understand the attitude of Dialectical Materialism to the problem of life.

Dialectical Materialism maintains that LIFE and CONSCIOUSNESS are qualitative products of this self movement of matter; they are properties arising from a particular ARRANGEMENT or INTEGRATION of matter in its self movement and qualitative development. (We have already dealt with the manner in which this self movement and qualitative development take place in our chapter on the Dialectical Pattern.)

MIND, according to Dialectical Materialism, is the highest qualitative change we are aware of in the self movement of matter. For, mind not only has an identity of its own, as is the case with all qualitative changes in the movement of matter, but mind in addition has a potentiality of its own. For, once mind comes into existence it can influence material development.

Dialectical Materialism, therefore, provides an explanation of the origin of life and consciousness based on the qualitative self movement and development of matter. It rejects the belief that the spirit

of God had to breathe into matter to produce life and consciousness.

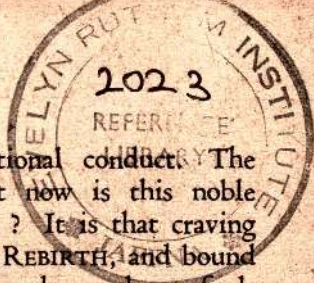
Buddhism, on the other hand, gives no explanation as to how life first came into being. It considers the problem a futile one, as it maintains that it is not a problem, the solution of which is in any way necessary for pursuing the correct path of human conduct and reaching one's goal. The Buddha did not consider it a problem of any practical importance, and therefore deemed any speculation on this topic to be more or less futile. To the question therefore how life first came into being Buddhism answers "Anamataggo yam Bhikkhave Samsaro. Bubbakoti na pannayati avijjanivarananam sattanam tanhasamyojananam sanhavatam" translated into English by Bhikkhu Narada as follows, "Without cognisable end is this Samsara. A FIRST BEGINNING OF BEING who obstructed by ignorance and fettered by craving wander and fare on, IS NOT TO BE PERCEIVED."

Now, although Buddhism does not deal with this problem of the origin of life, it nevertheless postulates rebirth i. e. a subsequent coming into existence of life once it originated. It tells us how, once life began, it came to be perpetuated in a series of births or existences which it terms Samsara. This problem of rebirth is dealt with in detail in the discourse on Samsara, called PATTICA SAMMUPADA, which means dependent origination. Here the Buddha says "Dependent on Avijja (ignorance) Sankhara or volitional activities arise. In dependence on these volitional activities, Vinnana or rebirth consciousness takes place. In dependence on Rebirth Consciousness, Nama-Rupa or the psycho-physical organism comes

into existence. In dependence on the psycho-physical organism, Salayatana or the senses as the instruments of craving (tanha) come into existence. In dependence on this six fold sense activity, Phassa or contact comes into existence. In dependence on contact, Vedana or feeling comes into existence. In dependence on feeling, Tanha or craving comes into existence. In dependence on craving, Upadana or clinging to a thing arises. In dependence upon clinging, the subconscious process of Bhava or becoming arises. In dependence on this process of becoming, Jati or rebirth is produced. Dependent on Rebirth are Jara-Marana (old age and death) Sokaparideva-Dukkha-Āmnassupayasa (sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair)".

It is important to note that these various phenomena which we come across in this process of Pattica Sammupada or dependent origination, are not so much related to each other by a causal nexus, as by dependence on one another. The reason why their relationship is not strictly a causal one is the simple fact that these phenomena proceed more in the form of a circle, so that one of these phenomena could just as much be the effect of another as it is its cause. Thus, Vedana or feeling might just as well cause Tanha or desire, as Tanha by ultimately producing Jati or rebirth would once again produce Vedana. The relationship between the various phenomena of Pattica Sammupada could, therefore, be more appropriately termed a dependent relationship than a causal nexus.

This process of dependent origination or rebirth will according to Buddhism go on, so long as there is Tanha or craving, which again is only a particular



expression of Kamma or volitional conduct. The Digha Nikaya 22 says, "What now is this noble truth of the origin of suffering? It is that craving WHICH GIVES RISE TO FRESH REBIRTH, and bound up with pleasure and lust, now here, there, finds ever fresh delight".

The CONDITION OR FORM of one's rebirth also depends on Kamma or one's volitional conduct at a particular time. Thus, the Samyutta Nikaya, 35 says "For owners of their deeds (Kamma) are the heirs of their deeds, their deeds are the womb from which they sprang, with their deeds they are bound up, their deeds are their refuge. Whatever deeds they do-good or evil-of such they will be the heirs". The Anguttara Nikaya, 33 says, "And wherever beings spring into existence, their deeds will ripen; and wherever their deeds ripen, there they will earn the fruits of those deeds, be it in this life, or be it in any other future life".

Kamma or volitional conduct, particularly in its manifestation of Tanha or craving, is therefore all-important in causing rebirth according to Buddhism. We will therefore have to deal with the theory of Kamma in greater detail and to analyse this theory in the light of Dialectical Materialism.

The most convenient classification of Kamma is that according to priority of effect. The first in this particular classification is GARUKA KAMMA or weighty kamma. This kamma is most dynamic, and whether good or bad its results follow either in this life or in the very next. There are, according to Buddhism, five bad types of Garuka Kamma (a) Matricide (b) Parricide (c) the murder of an Arahant (d) the

wounding of a Buddha, and (c) The creation of a schism in the priesthood.

To refer to another classification of Kamma, one's habitual acts or recollections constitute one's ACCINA KAMMA. As these habitual acts become second nature to one, they form one's character, and if Garuka Kamma, which we have just spoken of does not intervene, Accina Kamma would have an important influence in determining our next birth. ASANNA KAMMA is the kamma one produces on one's death bed. It has an important influence on the nature of one's next existence, for, if Garuka Kamma does not intervene, it can POSTPONE, though not eliminate, the effect of accina kamma. This is why pious Buddhists are most particular that a person on his death bed should be given all opportunities of right meditation and concentration. The effect of a bad accina kamma may thus be postponed.

There are other classifications of Kamma which we need not go into but which we might merely note in passing. Kusala Kamma or good kamma which ripens in sentient existence—Akusala Kamma or evil kamma which ripens in sentient existence. Kusala Kamma which ripens in the Realm of Form (Rupa Loka) and finally, Kusala Kamma which ripens in the Formless Realms (Arupa Loka).

The important point to bear in mind is that, according to this theory of rebirth, Kamma or volitional conduct, expressing itself in Tanha or craving, causes rebirth. Kamma also influences the condition of future existence. This does not render life perfectly passive, for, we ourselves are responsible for our own Kamma, for Kamma is VOLITIONAL conduct. But once

Kamma operates, the effect of it must materialise at some time or other. The effect of our Kamma, except in the case of Garuka Kamma, need not be realised in either this existence or the next, but may be realised in some remote future existence. We may be born not only as human beings, but as other living organisms as well, according to our Kamma.

This theory of rebirth therefore makes Tanha (craving), a particular expression of Kamma or volitional conduct, the conditioning factor of Samsara or the chain of existences. My present existence, for instance, is due, according to Buddhism, to volitional conduct of a particular kind in a previous existence. For, Buddhism maintains that such conduct in one existence causes and conditions, on the termination of that existence, a subsequent existence.

The question, however, which a Dialectical Materialist would want to ascertain is, whether this theory of rebirth provides a vitally necessary motive for treading the Eightfold Path. For if the Eightfold Path, the path of non-attachment, is the means whereby we could experience mental serenity HERE and NOW, isn't this a sufficient justification for treading this path? Isn't then a consideration of future existence, of what happens after death, a superfluous motive for treading the path?

In this connection, the question arises as to why I should be sufficiently interested in a future existence as to want to influence it in a particular way.

For, according to Buddhism, there is nothing enduring in me like a soul, which is passed on to a future existence which makes it unequivocally

MY future existence. For, if we are to examine the position analytically, the only connection between one existence and another in Samsara is that a factor in one existence (Kamma) causes another existence. But, if the link is only causative, what VITAL interest has one particular existence in moulding a subsequent existence in a particular way, or in that subsequent existence coming into being at all, for that matter? But, it will be argued that a present and a future existence are part and parcel of the same process of BECOMING. After all, even in this existence, Buddhism maintains that the elements which constitute existence at one moment are not the same as the elements which constitute existence at any other moment. What I deem to be myself, therefore, at one moment is not in existence at the next moment. And yet, we know that in life the I of one moment does something to benefit the I of another moment, for this in reality is the essence of doing something for one's benefit. But, if the I of one moment does something for the I of a subsequent moment, it will be argued that it is also justified in doing something for the benefit of the I which arises momentarily in some subsequent existence. For, all these momentary I's are part and parcel of the same process of BECOMING. But, two momentary I's of what we term a single life span are, except during infancy, connected with one another by memory. Sensations which we experience in this life can normally be RECOLLECTED. Memory links up a moment of existence with a prior moment of existence enabling thereby an actual EXPERIENCING of the fact that the momentary I's of one span of life are part and parcel

of the same process of becoming. This EXPERIENCING due to memory of continuity (not identity says Buddhism) provides a sufficiently galvanic motivation for the I of one moment benefiting the I of a subsequent moment within one existence. But, no Buddhist could say that such an EXPERIENCING of continuity due to memory, NORMALLY exists between the I of one moment in this existence and the I of a subsequent moment in a future existence, for, according to Buddhism, death, generally speaking, interrupts the functioning of memory. For, although the Buddha and His disciples and certain other persons with highly disciplined minds were, according to the Buddhist scriptures, able to remember their past births, Buddhism does not and cannot postulate such a functioning of memory in the case of the overwhelming majority of the human race. So that, if there isn't NORMALLY an EXPERIENCING of continuity between a future life span and this existence, then the idea of benefiting such a future existence, which is only connected with this existence in that certain karmic factors in this existence caused it, may be a valid motive for ethical action, but certainly not a DYNAMIC one.

Actually, the Buddhist conception of rebirth which cannot NORMALLY postulate an EXPERIENCING of continuity between this existence and a future one, which rejects the existence of anything permanent and enduring which is passed on from this existence to a future existence, which considers the only connection between one existence and another in Samsara to be solely causative, can hardly be said to postulate the survival of any PARTICULAR LIVING BEING after

death. As a matter of fact, this Buddhist viewpoint is not far removed from the position of Dialectical Materialism, which on the ground of its rejection of any IDENTITY between any two existences separated in point of time, categorically denies the survival of any PARTICULAR LIVING BEING after death. The only discrepancy between the two viewpoints is that Buddhism postulates a CAUSAL connection between existences, in that KAMMA or VOLITIONAL CONDUCT in one existence, particularly in the form of Tanha or craving for things of the senses, causes and conditions on the termination of that existence a subsequent existence. Dialectical Materialism does not accept this point of view. It maintains that, as life is prior to craving, (for craving even originally must have been the act of a LIVING being) then the coming into existence of life at any time can once again be independent of the volitional conduct of a supposed previous existence, and need not be dependent on the prior termination of such a previous existence.

However, if the Buddha doctrine gives, as it claims to be able to give, the maximum of mental serenity to human beings HERE IN THIS EXISTENCE, this seems to be the most dynamic reason we have so far discussed for the recognition and acceptance of Buddhism. The idea of benefiting a future existence, which is only connected with this existence causally, in that certain karmic factors in this existence caused it, may be, as stated before, a valid motive for ethical action, but certainly not a DYNAMIC one.

From this point of view, the attainment of the Buddhist goal of NIRVANA can motivate human conduct DYNAMICALLY, only in so far as Nirvana

means the highest state of non-attachment and mental harmony attainable IN THIS LIFE. As a matter of fact, reference in Buddhist texts to Nirvana as an ultimate state, which a person reaching the highest condition of non-attachment and mental harmony attains AFTER DEATH, is so negative and ambiguous that one is justified in assuming that it isn't a vital aspect of Buddhist thought. For, this is an inference compatible with Buddha's own enlightenment and his reticence on this subject. If, it was of vital importance to Buddhist thought, we are entitled to presume that the Buddha would have dealt with it much less meagrely and ambiguously than he actually did.

In further support of the point of view that considerations of rebirth are by no means an essential reason for treading the Eightfold Path of Buddhism it will be useful to refer to that recent analysis of Buddhist philosophy entitled, "The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhism" by Anagarika Govinda. Referring to *Pattica Samupada* or Dependent Origination and the twelve links of this formula Govinda says, "From the standpoint of time they can be divided into three periods—past, present and future—usually conceived as three consecutive existences THOUGH THEY COULD JUST AS WELL BE APPLIED TO A SUCCESSION OF MOMENTS IN THE INCESSANTLY FLOWING STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS, OR TO DIFFERENT PERIODS (PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE) WITHIN ONE AND THE SAME LIFE." Govinda goes on to say, "Thus the *Pattica Samupada* could be accepted in its general idea, even by those who do not share the Buddhist view about rebirth in past and future existences. This view, by the way, can never be proved

or disproved scientifically, like many facts of experience. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEE THAT THE STRUCTURE OF THE BUDDHA DHAMMA—EVEN IF WE TAKE IT AS A SYSTEM OF THOUGHT—DOES NOT DEPEND ON IT AND IS NOT AFFECTED BY THE INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THIS PROBLEM.” Here then is a definite opinion that the idea of rebirth is not a VITAL aspect of Buddhist thought, and coming, as it does, from Anagarika B. Govinda it deserves attention.

There nevertheless remains, as we pointed out, a vital justification for treading the Eightfold Path of Buddhism, if Buddhism, as it is claimed, creates mental harmony in this particular existence of ours. The Majjhima Nikaya, 63 says, “For, the theory exists, or whether it does not exist that the world is eternal or temporal, or finite or infinite, certainly there is birth, there is decay, there is death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, the extinction of which ATTAINABLE EVEN IN THIS LIFE, I MAKE KNOWN UNTO YOU.” The significance of this view point is that ethical conduct has its basic motive and justification in what happens in this existence and not in what happens in a supposed hereafter. This, it is important to note, is also the ethical viewpoint of Dialectical Materialism.

The acceptance of the Eightfold Path, therefore, should be considered primarily as a means of producing mental harmony in this life of ours *i.e.* here and now. Nirvana in this sense, as we have already pointed out, is the realisation in THIS LIFE of perfect mental harmony.

In this connection, it is necessary to point out that

many people hold the erroneous belief that the postulate "life is subject to disharmony," means that at any rate a preponderance of disharmony over harmony is, according to Buddhism, the lot of each and every human being. Such pessimism is not a feature of Buddhist thought, for adherence to the Eightfold Path, according to Buddhism, must produce in this existence an overwhelming preponderance of harmony. As Anagarika Govinda points out in his work, "The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy", out of the 121 classes of consciousness which are discussed in Buddhist psychology, SIXTY-THREE are accompanied by joy, AND ONLY THREE are painful while the remaining fifty five classes are indifferent. This makes it quite clear that, according to Buddhism, life is not INEVITABLY sorrowful or disharmonious but becomes so because of circumstances well within human control. As Anagarika Govinda says, "How deluded is man, that he mainly dwells in those three painful states of consciousness, though there are overwhelmingly more possibilities of happiness". The Buddha and his disciples experienced such a preponderance of harmony IN THIS LIFE, by pursuing the Eightfold Path, and that in itself should be to a Buddhist a sufficiently dynamic motive for trading this Eightfold Path of Buddhism.

NON-ATTACHMENT

(8)

WE have seen that the Eightfold Path of Buddhism is a code of ethics and mental discipline which enables man to deal with the problem of Dukkha, best translated as "unsatisfactoriness." It is necessary therefore, before proceeding any further in our analysis of the ethics and mental discipline of Buddhism, to obtain as clear an idea as possible of Dukkha.

Dukkha, it must first and foremost be realised, includes physical suffering, but also has a wider connotation. Mere physical suffering could, with the advance of science, be increasingly reduced. Disease, famine and other such calamities come within the purview of science, and are increasingly capable of a scientific solution. But, Dukkha could continue even if suffering due to physical causes ceases, for even more appropriately, Dukkha connotes that disharmony of impeded volition caused by CRAVING AND HATRED and is consequently the result of ignorant or deluded conduct. Suffering, due to physical pain, therefore is only a minor aspect of Dukkha, the more important manifestation of which arises under the following circumstances. Our environment, as we know it, is impermanent, and so is the content of our mind. Happiness and contentment must arise when our mind is in harmony with environment, or when a particular environment could be moulded to our liking. If this process of adaptation does not take

place, a condition of impeded volition or Dukkha comes into existence. But, our environment is far from static. It is in a state of flux, and when it does change, mind does not necessarily change automatically in unison with it, so as to adapt itself harmoniously to the new environmental situation. Either, the mind yearns for the old environment, or the adaptation to the new environmental situation is a gradual process. In both instances, the mental disharmony of impeded volition ensues. Impermanency, in such circumstances, produces Dukkha.

Now, this impermanency of environment need not inevitably cause Dukkha if we are able to appreciate the fact of a changing environment, and conduct ourselves accordingly. As a matter of fact, change of itself is often a good thing; we frequently hear it said, and with a good deal of truth, that 'too much of a thing is good for nothing.' But, why then is this fact of impermanence a basic cause of Dukkha? It is because of TANHA or craving, which makes us forget the law of change in all phenomena, and makes us want something, even when owing to the operation of this inherent law of change, we cannot have it. A temporary realisation of what we crave for, only results in Uppadana (clinging), while a frustration of craving produces intensified longing (Lobha) and hatred (Dhosa).

Desire, of itself, is not evil. The correct type of desire, as a matter of fact, is exceedingly salutary. In one of the dialogues of the Majjhima Sutta III, 251 instances are given of the correct type of desire to be cultivated e.g. the desire for emancipation from sensuality; aspirations towards the attainment of love

towards others; the wish not to injure other living things; the desire for the eradication of wrong, and the promotion of right dispositions in one's own heart and so on. Buddhism, therefore, quite obviously, does not postulate the suppression of all desires, as is commonly misconceived. Obviously, desires that need to be suppressed are desires that result in Tanha or craving for or clinging to a thing knowing its impermanence.

Now, if we are to analyse Tanha or craving carefully, it will not be difficult for us to see that its basic consideration is SELF. This exaggerated consideration of self produces a self-centred urge for incessant appropriation, and often results in aggrandisement. The self-centred urge for incessant appropriation, when frustrated, results in impeded volition or Dukkha. The annihilation of Dukkha, and the creation of mental harmony, therefore depends on adherence to a code of behaviour which eschews a self-centred disposition. Buddhist ethics and the mental discipline of Buddhism which is termed the Eightfold Path has this particular purpose in view. It helps its adherents to experience that mental harmony of NON-ATTACHMENT, produced by a negation of a self-centred disposition.

The *modus operandi* of achieving this harmony of non-attachment, which we shall deal with in some detail and which is contained in the Eightfold Path has two general features which need to be noticed. First of all, there is the problem of our relationship to other living beings, the problem of ethics or morality. The ethics or morality of the Eightfold Path is one fundamentally based on "Maitriya" or

compassion towards other living beings. The second problem which the adherent of the Eightfold Path has to deal with is that of mental discipline. The problem, of right concentration or meditation. The Eightfold Path is a series of progressive steps towards the complete realisation of non-attachment. Maitriya or compassion is an essential feature of the Path, but the higher stages of the Path leading to complete non-attachment, are realised in the essentially subjective condition of Bhavana or meditation. In view of the importance attached to these higher stages of mental development in Buddhism, we will now deal with them in some detail.

Concentration, according to Buddhism, is limited or unlimited according as objects are perceivable through the senses, or perceivable through the mind independent of the senses. The lowest form of concentration known to Buddhism is what is termed KAMA VACARA CITTA. Here, the object of consciousness is not only viewed through the senses, but also becomes an object of either craving or aversion. Just above this form of consciousness is RUPA VACARA CITTA or the domain of pure form. In this mental state, consciousness, as in the previous case, contemplates the FORM of the object, but unlike the previous case, this concentration on form is devoid of craving and is, consequently, removed from the egotistic disposition of the lower type of consciousness. In this mental state, the five main mental hindrances are eliminated. They are (1) THINA AND MIDDHA, sloth and torpor. (2) VICIKICCA, doubt or uncertainty. (3) DHOSA AND VIYAPADA,

hatred and resentment. (4) UDDACCA KUKKUCA, restlessness and mental worry (5) LOBHA, greed. These five hindrances are destroyed by the five features of this particular state of consciousness which are VITAKKA, thinking; VICARA, reflected or sustained thought; PITI rapture; SUKKHA, happiness, and EKAGGATA one-pointedness. Thus, Vitakka and Vicara (initial and sustained thought) destroy the first hindrance of Thina Middha (sloth and torpor). Piti (rapture) destroys Dhosa and Viyapada (hatred). Sukkha (happiness) destroys Udacca Kukkucca (restlessness and mental worry). Ekaggata (concentration or one-pointedness) destroys Lobha (greed). This realm of pure form can produce 5 JHANAS or trances. The first Jhana contains all the elements of the realm of pure form we have referred to *i.e.* Vitakka, Vicara, Piti, Sukkha, Ekkagata. In the second Jhana, Vitakka (initial thought) disappears and the others remain. In the third Jhana in addition to Vitakka, Vicara (sustained thought) disappears and the others remain. In the fourth Jhana in addition to the two already mentioned, Piti (rapture) disappears and only two remain. In the fifth Jhana, Sukkha (happiness) disappears and only Ekkagata (one-pointedness) remains. When this happens, we are left in what is known as a pure state of concentration. These five Jhanas of Rupa Loka Citta or the consciousness of Pure Form are well depicted by Anagarika Govinda in his "Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy" in the shape of a triangle of decreasing factors.

VITTAKKA VICARA PITI SUKKHA EKKAGATA
 VICARA PITI SUKKHA EKKAGATA
 *PITI SUKKHA EKKAGATA
 SUKKHA EKKAGATA
 EKKAGATA

We now come to a still higher mental state, ARUPA VACARA CITTA or the sphere of NON-FORM. Here as in the case of Rupa Loka Citta, or the sphere of pure form, which we have just discussed, craving and hatred are eliminated. But, unlike Rupa Loka Citta, the idea of form is also completely eliminated. Space becomes the DIRECT and INTUITIVE object of consciousness. It has two properties, AKASANCAYATANA (infinity) and AKINCANNAYA, non-materiality. Both these are objects of intuitive consciousness. Anagarika Govinda in his "Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy" says, "During an intuitive experience, consciousness entirely identifies itself with and merges into the object; if it is an infinite one, CONSCIOUSNESS ALSO BECOMES UNLIMITED." This infinity of consciousness is termed VINNANCAYATANA. Once this stage is realised, a lofty condition of mental serenity results. Arupa Loka consciousness or the intuitive consciousness of immateriality and unlimitedness, therefore, consists of the following Jhanas or trance experiences. AKASANANCAYATANA, the sphere of the infinity of space, VINNANCAYATANA, the sphere of the infinity of consciousness, AKINCANAYATANA, the sphere of non-materiality.

The forms of meditation we have dealt with are collectively called Samadhi Bhavana. A higher stage of meditation than even Samadhi Bahavana is Vip-

assana Bhavana or intuitive insight into Dukkha (disharmony), Anicca (Impermanence) and Anatta (soullessness). For, it is only a complete comprehension of these three phenomena which makes for perfection and leads one to the goal of Nibbhana.

We have gone into this question of meditation and concentration at some length because, as we have stated, it constitutes the highest aspect of the practice of non-attachment. But, at the same time, we must not be unmindful of the ETHICAL aspects of the Eight-fold Path based on Maitriya or compassion towards living beings. As a matter of fact, we shall be dealing with this ethical aspect of the Path, step by step, a little later on, but it is necessary to emphasise at this stage that the main purpose of Buddhist ethics is to realise non-attachment as is also the purpose of meditation and concentration which we have already dealt with.

Now what is the position of Dialectical Materialism regarding this fundamental Buddhist doctrine of NON-ATTACHMENT? The one criterion of right conduct, according to Dialectical Materialism, is whether such conduct is conducive to social good and social development. If a particular course of action is good for society, and is conducive to social development it is according to Dialectical Materialism ethically justifiable. Dialectical Materialism, therefore, enjoins the merging of one's self in social welfare, spending one's whole life in doing social good, and contributing to social development. The socialist system of society, which every Dialectical Materialist endeavours to establish and consolidate, will provide the necessary stimulus for the intensification of such a social sense,

providing rapidly increasing individual benefits through such an intensification of the social sense. We, therefore, see that Dialectical Materialism is as much at pains to negate a self-centred outlook as Buddhism is, though its *modus operandi* for achieving this purpose is to merge one's interests in social good and to contribute to social development. In as much therefore as Dialectical Materialism enjoins us to work wholeheartedly for society and social development and to merge our interests completely in a movement for this purpose and to consider the welfare of the movement above everything else, including oneself, such conduct which it enjoins can be verily considered one of non-attachment.

But, as is quite evident, there is a difference in the *modus operandi* of Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism in regard to a realisation of non-attachment. Buddhism considers meditation and concentration, essentially a SUBJECTIVE disposition, as the highest expression of non-attachment. Although the merging of our interests in social good would, generally speaking, be extolled by Buddhism on the ground of Maitriya (compassion), nevertheless the higher stages of the Eightfold Path exclude a consideration of social problems, as the mind is largely absorbed in the consideration of the immaterial and the unlimited, and in an intuitive experience of impermanence and and ego-lessness.

Here then it would seem as if a wide discrepancy exists between Dialectical Materialism and Buddhism, for Dialectical Materialism would say, as we have already pointed out, that the best way of eliminating a self-centred disposition is to merge one's interests

in social good and social development. Buddhism, on the other hand, although emphasising the importance of doing good to others, which is the essence of Maitriya, nevertheless considers the loftiest realisation of non-attachment to be the product of meditation *i.e.* the product of an essentially SUBJECTIVE life.

Now, if we should venture to suggest why an essentially subjective process of mental discipline is thus considered by Buddhism to be a higher manifestation of non-attachment than completely merging one's interests in social problems it is this. Social environment, as we know it historically and as we know it today in capitalist society, contains features which are highly conducive to a self-centred disposition. As a matter of fact there are two conflicting motives in social existence which have influenced human conduct in the past, and which influence human conduct even today. First of all we have a social sense produced by an appreciation of the fact that combination by human beings is the best way of combating malefic forces which threaten human existence. But, at the same time, so long as the productive capacity of human beings is seriously restricted, social existence must be characterised by the NECESSITY for man to struggle against man for his basic economic existence. Consequently, a self-centred disposition, particularly in the form of aggrandisement, must have a definite place in the social conscience, and the majority of human beings living an active social life must necessarily be influenced by this environment. This is what lends support to the point of view that the safest way of attaining the HIGHEST degree of non-attachment is not by

merging one's interests in social problems, but by absorbing one's attention in a SUBJECTIVE process of mental discipline.

But, a Dialectical Materialist would stress the fact that the NECESSITY for a struggle for existence within society, which stimulates aggrandisement, is only an indication of the fact that basic human requirements have yet to be produced on a scale which would keep not merely a few, but every one, above want. Today, however, in this machine age, the productive capacity of society CAN satisfy the basic human wants of each and every one in society, if it is not frustrated, as it is, by the economic system in which we live. The struggle of man against man in society with its appalling consequences in our contemporary age would be condemned, and would cease to be tolerated by the social conscience if not that it is stimulated by a frustration of the productive capacity of society under the existing economic system. A Dialectical Materialist would therefore contend that a socialist economy, by being able to put an end to this frustration of productive capacity within society, could consequently eliminate the NECESSITY for man to struggle against man. The social conscience in a socialist world will cease to tolerate such a struggle of man against man with its increasingly repulsive and appalling consequences in our present age; for socialist society will be rid of that environmental influence of a frustration of productive capacity in society, which NECESSITATES such a struggle for existence. Consequently, aggrandisement engendered by this NECESSITY for a struggle for existence will disappear, or at any rate, lose its present emphasis.

Dialectical Materialism, therefore, considers the contention that meditation is the best method of non-attachment (in as much as social existence contains certain features which are conducive to aggrandisement) to appertain to particular conditions of social existence which we are now in a position to go beyond.

As a matter of fact, we have spoken of the possibility even today, of individuals in their ethical life rising above their environmental influences, and therefore Dialectical Materialism would say that in the case of conscious socialists, the highest manifestation of non-attachment is the merging of their interests in social good; the highest expression of which in the present historical stage of social development is the merging of interests, completely and unconditionally, in a movement for the establishment of a Socialist Society.

But, why does Dialectical Materialism place such great emphasis on non-attachment through merging our interests in social good? It is because of its appreciation of the VITAL NECESSITY OF SOCIETY TO THE HUMAN RACE. To understand this viewpoint of Dialectical Materialism, let us endeavour to indicate the importance of society to human beings. Why should every effort be made to maintain and develop social existence? First and foremost, social existence ensures the handing down to subsequent generations of the accumulated experience of the past. There is little opportunity of knowledge getting lost in the mists of time, when it is a social possession. If society did not exist, then the handing down of human experience would have been much less possible.

than has been the case. This accumulation and preservation of knowledge acquired by past generations, which social existence ensures, is a vital factor in mental development. For, with the accumulated experience of the past at our disposal, we can start our quest of knowledge, just where knowledge acquired by previous generations terminated, and thereby further develop such knowledge. Moreover, social existence enables us to compare our experiences with a large number of contemporary research workers in the same field, and knowledge develops enormously by such a pooling of experiences.

In addition, we have to remember that language itself is a SOCIAL product, and the importance of this fact can be appreciated when we realise that language is a prerequisite of advanced thought, enabling us to classify sense impressions and reason logically. Man's ability to analyse his environment, and to even formulate a correct philosophy of life, is the result of the mental development of the human race to which social existence has made an indispensable contribution. And, for the very same reason, if social existence begins to disintegrate, the mental development of the human race would within an appreciable period of time be stultified for want of this vital prerequisite.

The founder of Buddhism himself, indirectly owed a considerable deal to society. For his philosophical system is the product of a disciplined mind, a mind which could not have neglected to investigate the accumulated philosophical and psychological knowledge of the past, preserved through social existence.

Again the preservation of the doctrines of Gautama

the Buddha to our present day, and our ability to acquaint ourselves with these doctrines, and to reap their benefits, is the result of language and cultural heritage which are essentially social phenomena.

Moreover, social existence enables us to utilise the advantages of COLLECTIVE EFFORT. Today, collective effort is an indispensable requisite of large-scale production which characterises our MACHINE AGE. But, why make a fuss about this machine age based on large-scale collective effort and rendered possible by SOCIAL EXISTENCE? We may even be told that the introduction of machinery into industry in the long run has done more harm than good to human beings. Now, as regards the harm done by the introduction of machinery, it is not difficult to establish the fact that it is not the machine which produces such harm, but the economic system in which the machine functions today. As the philosopher Thomas Aquinas remarked, "there are no bad things, but bad uses of things." However, to come to the advantages of machine production, and the consequent importance of the collective effort, and the SOCIAL ORGANISM on which it depends, let us indicate why machine production IS OF VITAL SIGNIFICANCE to the human race.

Machine production, if correctly directed, can facilitate man's economic life immeasurably, and the importance of man's economic life should not be underestimated; for the human race cannot live ethically on empty stomachs. But, how does machine production facilitate man's economic life? Firstly, it "removes the backache" from his economic toil, which means that the more irksome forms of manual

labour can now be increasingly performed mechanically. But much more important is the fact that the machine should enable man to produce his basic requirements in a much shorter time than would otherwise be the case. Increasing mechanisation, therefore, if correctly directed, must mean increasing possibilities of leisure, not merely for a few individuals but for every one in society; leisure which is so very necessary for ETHICAL, AESTHETIC and SCIENTIFIC PURSUITS. But, it should not be forgotten that these incalculable, benefits of machine production necessitate collective effort and therefore SOCIAL EXISTENCE.

But, not only is social existence a matter of vital importance to the human race, as we have already pointed out, but the problem of the correct SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT cannot be overlooked. For, the great majority of human beings are influenced in their ethical life by environmental considerations, specially by social environment or the type of society in existence. This does not, as we have seen, mean that particular individuals cannot rise above their environmental influence in their ethical life. For, Dialectical Materialism does appreciate the potentialities of mental life; but, it nevertheless maintains that environmental influences, particularly the influence of social environment, is of the greatest importance in the ethical life of the vast majority of human beings. The history of all religions teaches us the same lesson. For, although religion has produced individuals of the highest ethical loftiness, it has never been able to create a durable impression on mass character. The reason is obvious. For MOST human beings are in regard to their ethical life influenced

by their environment, and so long as pernicious environmental influences prevail, these frustrate the realisation of a desired ethical attitude on a mass scale.

If, therefore, a particular type of environment and social organisation is as we have indicated, A CONDITION PRECEDENT FOR A MASS ABANDONMENT OF A SELF-CENTRED DISPOSITION IN HUMAN BEINGS, THEN IT IS A MATTER OF IMPORTANCE, IN ORDER TO FACILITATE AN EXPRESSION OF NON-ATTACHMENT, NOT ONLY BY PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS BUT BY THE GREAT MASS OF HUMANITY THAT THAT PARTICULAR ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO EXISTENCE. Our conduct must necessarily be motivated by a desire to create that new environment and social organisation, and to work for it whole-heartedly, which is to merge our entire interests in social good.

The theoretical position of Dialectical Materialism, therefore, leads us to the conclusion that we should merge our interests in the social problem of creating the right type of social organisation and environment. A Dialectical Materialist needs to put this theoretical position into practice, for Dialectical Materialism postulates the unity of theory and practice. This means that our theoretical position should always be TESTED by practical application and that conduct should be preceded by theoretical analysis. The divorce of theory and practice which is a common occurrence, makes thought impotent and practice or conduct irrational. The discrepancy between what religions preach in regard to ethics and what men practice, as demonstrated by their conduct, is an important example of this disunity of theory and practice. But,

in this case Dialectical Materialism maintains that certain powerful influences of our social environment, such as the present NECESSITY for man to struggle against man for his economic existence, facilitate this discrepancy between the ethical aspects of religious theory and human conduct, and it asserts that unless these influences of our social environment are removed, the ethical conduct of the majority of the human race will fail to manifest a unity of theory and practice.

Thus, it is because Dialectical Materialism realises the vital importance to human beings of social existence, and the consequent need to establish and maintain the CORRECT FORM OF SOCIAL ORGANISATION, that when it comes to choosing between various forms of non-attachment it has no hesitation, in giving pride of place to the complete merging of one's interests in social good.

Meditation, undoubtedly, has psychic features of very considerable value and as such, Dialectical Materialism, appreciating the potentialities of mind once it comes into existence, must take cognisance of and should, in fact, welcome this form of mental development. But, at the same time, it weighs the importance of various forms of non-attachment, and as stated before, comes to the irresistible conclusion that the form of non-attachment which merits our keenest attention is that of completely merging our interests in social good. The expression of this in the present historical stage of social development is, according to Dialectical Materialism, the merging of our identity and interests, completely and unconditionally,

in a movement for the establishment of a socialist society.

We do not intend to expatiate on the economics of Socialism in a purely philosophical work such as the present undertaking, and therefore will merely state that socialist production is a PLANNED system of production which will not be primarily motivated by the self-centred consideration of private profit, but by the SOCIAL purpose of providing human requirements to each and every individual in society. As its basic motive is primarily a social one and not the private profit of a few with its malefic egotism, production will have to be under public ownership. Socialist society will eliminate that frustration which is taking place today of man's vast productive capacity. The consequent removal by means of a vast and unimpeded productivity of the NECESSITY for man to struggle against man for his economic existence will, in view of the increasingly catastrophic consequences of this struggle in our present age, enlist mass loyalty to this new form of society. The struggle of man against man will in a socialist society be replaced by an intensified SOCIAL or collective effort to wrest increasing benefits from physical nature.

This socialist motive of production, namely, benefit to each and every member of society, is of interest to a student of philosophy. For it can pertinently be asked, whether this idea of benefiting human beings amounts to merely handing out luxuries, still more luxuries, luxuries *ad infinitum*. For, quite a number of people will reasonably doubt whether this amounts to a BENEFIT to human beings. It must, therefore, be stated immediately that life, as visualised by a

socialist, is not an aimless wallowing in luxury. The basic motive of socialist economics in providing the material requirements of life in abundance is that of increasingly equipping each and every individual with material requisites necessary to enable him to withstand malefic physical forces which would otherwise victimise him, and which, in the case of the majority of human beings who cannot rise above environmental influences, must also impede mental development. When it provides each and every individual in society with opportunities of adequate nourishment, it is not for the purpose of creating gluttons in society, but to enable each and every individual to improve in health and be less and less victimised by disease. If, for instance, it aims at providing each and every person in society with a speedy mode of transport, it is not to make human beings lazy, but to enable every individual to conquer distance and thus save on time that could better be utilised in, say, mental development. The creation of luxuries for the purpose of wallowing aimlessly in luxuries may be a motive which a certain section of contemporary society may relish, but it has nothing to do with Socialism. The machinery of socialist education will be utilised to the fullest degree to direct man's mind away from such a futile purpose in life. But, this is not to go to the other extreme of extolling a philosophy of poverty. For, Socialism considers such a philosophy incompatible with its basic economic aim of providing each and every member of society with every material requirement necessary to combat the ravages of natural forces and all malefic influences of physical environment. In addition, machine pro-

duction, which will be scientifically PLANNED in a socialist economy, will, as we have already pointed out, progressively reduce man's economic toil. So that not merely a few individuals in society, but all human beings will have increasing leisure for ethical, aesthetic and scientific development.

Moreover, by creating a healthy social environment, where older environmental influences have been malefic in their influences on the ethical life of human beings, Socialist Society will enable not merely the infinitesimal few who could rise above the influence of their social environment or could detach themselves from their social environment, but the overwhelming majority of the human race to develop ethically and culturally. **THUS, MAN WILL GRADUALLY CEASE TO BE THE VICTIM OF HIS ENVIRONMENT, NOT BY DETACHING HIMSELF FROM IT, BUT BY PROGRESSIVELY IMPROVING IT AND THEREFORE MASTERING IT.**

Socialist society has a special significance to the Buddhist intellectual world, which needs to be specially recognised. If a self centred disposition, particularly in the form of aggrandisement, is primarily necessitated by the struggle for existence within society, which in turn is stimulated by a shortage of human requirements or a frustration of productive capacity, then, so long as we have an economic system which frustrates productive capacity, the **NECESSITY** for man to struggle against man for existence will continue with its psychological reaction of egotism. A socialist society, as we have pointed out, with its planned system of social production, with its removal of the fetters imposed on man's productive capacity by the existing economic system, with its negation of the self centred

motive of private profit, will, with the aid of the modern machine, create conditions of increasing productivity for the benefit of each and every member of society. A socialist society will consequently reduce, and ultimately negate the NECESSITY for man to struggle against man for his existence. We have indicated that once the NECESSITY for such a struggle is removed in this way, its repulsive nature and catastrophic consequences in our present age will be increasingly and seriously realised by the vast majority of human beings, and consequently its psychological reaction of a malefic egotism will lose a considerable stimulus. A socialist society, therefore, by removing the PRIME NECESSITY for man to struggle against man for his basic economic existence, will create environmental conditions in which not merely the few, who in their ethical life rise above environmental influences, but the vast majority of the human race could eschew a self centred disposition in life. As such, a socialist society will greatly facilitate the practice of non-attachment which is so fundamental to the Buddhist mode of life.

THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

AND

THE ESSENCE OF ETHICS

(9)

ETHICAL SYSTEMS can be classified into two main groups. Those which can be called dependent systems, and those which are independent or intuitive in character. A dependent system of ethics is one in which ethical values **DEPEND** on results. The good or bad nature of an act depends on whether such an act produces or does not produce a beneficial or harmonious result.

An independent system of ethics evaluates conduct **INDEPENDENT** of results. According to these independent or intuitive systems, revelation or intuition intimates to us whether an act is good or bad independent of results or consequences.

Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism uphold a dependent system of ethics. For, both systems evaluate **RESULTS** as being beneficial or not beneficial, and consider such an evaluation as the most important factor in determining the ethical value of acts. Of course, as we will see, a discrepancy can arise as to what constitutes a beneficial result. A different criterion may be applied by different systems in determining whether a result is beneficial or not. But, it is important to note that in equating good and bad with harmonious and disharmonious consequences or beneficial and detrimental results, both Buddhism

and Dialectical Materialism uphold a dependent system of ethics, in contradistinction to the many ethical systems which are independent or intuitive in character.

The ethics of Buddhism postulates an avoidance of two extremes, vulgar and ignoble self-indulgence and profitless self-mortification. The Eightfold Path which contains this ethical viewpoint of Buddhism is conveniently classified as follows :

PANNA (WISDOM)

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Samma Ditthi | —right understanding. |
| Samma Sankappa | —right mindedness |

SILA (MORALITY)

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Samma Vaca | —(right speech) abstaining from lying and slander. |
| Samma Kammanta | —(right action) abstaining from killing, stealing and from unlawful sexual intercourse |
| Samma Ajiva | —(right living) avoidance of 5 trades <i>i.e.</i> trade in arms, in living beings, in flesh, in intoxicating drinks and in poison.
Also avoidance of deceit, treachery, soothsaying, trickery, usury. |

SAMADHI (CONCENTRATION)

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| Samma Vayama | —right effort. |
| Samma Sati | —right attention. |
| Samma Samadhi | —right concentration. |

Now, the first of these classifications right understanding and right mindedness indicates a condition of mind necessary for ethical conduct. Thus, the appreciation of the fact that life is subject to Dukkha or unsatisfactoriness, that Dukkha has a cause, that Dukkha could be extinguished, and that there is a path to the extermination of Dukkha, constitutes this right understanding and rightmindedness which motivate morality or ethical conduct. Right effort and right attention which belong to the last category of our classification of the Eightfold Path are also not the essence of ethical action, but preliminaries to it.

Right concentration, which comes last in this category, we have already dealt with in our discussion on meditation. We referred to various forms of concentration and meditation known to Buddhism, and their specific value as a means of manifesting non-attachment. We also pointed out that Dialectical Materialism will have to take cognisance of the valuable psychic experiences of these forms of meditation, though we pointed out the reason why it nevertheless considers the merging of our complete interest in social problems, such as social development as the highest manifestation of non-attachment.

We now come to the category SILA of our classification of the Eightfold Path. This category contains the essence of the Buddhist code of ethics or morality. It is, as we have seen, composed of Samma Vaca, abstinence from lying and slander, Samma Kammanta, abstinence from killing, stealing and from unlawful sexual intercourse, and Samma Ajiva which consists of (a) the avoidance of 5 trades *i.e.* trade in arms, in

living beings, in flesh, in intoxicating drinks and in poison (b) an avoidance of deceit, treachery, soothsaying, trickery and usury.

In considering the ethical values of Dialectical Materialism we have to firstly deal with a very important problem in ethics, whether ethical values are ABSOLUTE values, eternal in their applicability or whether they are RELATIVE values, liable to reinterpretation and even change, owing to their dependence on changing circumstances. Dialectical Materialism adopts the definite attitude that whatever be the ethical values of any particular religion, the ethical values which influence human life are not absolute values, are not eternal in their applicability. For, Dialectical Materialism postulates that the factors of production, which change and develop, produce economic relationships among men for operating these factors of production. (These economic relationships in a class-stratified society are between those who own or largely control the means of production and those who do not exercise such ownership or control). Economic relationships create social relationships, and on the foundation of these socio-economic relationships a superstructure of ethical and other values comes into existence to secure the stability of the social form. In a class—stratified society the ideology which consolidates a social form necessarily consolidates the position of the dominant class in that social form. But, as the factors of production change and develop, economic relationships, social relationships and the superstructure of ethical values are all liable to undergo change. Of course, this does not mean that any particular ethical postulate cannot have a

relevance right down the centuries. For, it is quite possible that an ethical postulate is able to fit into developing social forms, though even then as we shall see, it is subject to reinterpretation and readjustment. But, this is very different to vesting any ethical postulate with an absolute value, eternal in its applicability and incapable of waning in importance or even disappearing altogether. As a matter of fact, Dialectical Materialism denies the existence of final and ultimate truths in ethics, which is only an aspect of its wider assertion that our knowledge of anything is rarely FINAL AND ULTIMATE. Though, we may know more about a thing today than we knew about it in the past, and may know more about it in the future than we know about it at present, our knowledge will rarely be final and ultimate. Knowledge in general, according to Dialectical Materialism, becomes deeper, but is never completed, for it can never exhaust the multiform content of the objective world.

Final and ultimate knowledge therefore, of all there is to be known, will never, according to Dialectical Materialism, be acquired, though knowledge becomes deeper and deeper in point of time.

In order to illustrate this viewpoint of Dialectical Materialism, Engels, in his "Anti-Duhring," divides knowledge into three main departments.

He first deals with sciences connected with inanimate nature and which are to a greater or lesser degree susceptible of mathematical treatment. It is in these sciences, where comparatively speaking, a certain amount of final and ultimate truth is available, and that is why these sciences are termed EXACT SCIENCES.

For example, in mathematics such assertions as "two and two equals four" or that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, may claim to be final and ultimate truths. But, even in the sphere of mathematics, Engels points out that with the introduction of variable magnitudes and the extension of this variability to the infinitely large and the infinitely small, final and ultimate truths are limited in number.

Physics and Chemistry are an even less fertile source than mathematics of final and ultimate truth. We are constantly changing our view point on vital questions of Physics and Chemistry. Our very visual comprehension of the objects they deal with is subject to the interference of light waves. In the case of Geology, we are dealing with events which, as Engels, point out, have taken place not only in our absence, but in the absence of any human being, which renders the garnering of final and ultimate truth in Geology a highly restricted operation.

Having dealt with the exact sciences, Engels examines a second department of human knowledge, namely, the investigation of living organisms. He tells us, "The solution of each question (in this branch of knowledge) gives rise to a host of other questions, but each separate problem can only be solved piecemeal, through a series of investigations which often require centuries to complete, and even then the need for a systematic presentation of all these interrelations makes it necessary once more to surround the final and ultimate truth with a luxuriant growth of hypotheses." Engels goes on to point out that even now there are numerous missing links in

bringing the symptoms of a disease into some rational relationship with its causes. He continues "Often enough, discoveries, such as that of the cell are made which compel us to revise completely all formerly established final and ultimate truths leaving us with such absolute truths as "all female mammals have lacteal glands" etc.

Of course, all this does not mean that subsequent discoveries completely negate previous knowledge, for to say so is to conclude that knowledge is ENTIRELY relative or that nothing is true. For instance, the discovery of Copernicus that the earth went round the sun was a big surprise to Astronomy which, up till then, fully believed that the sun went round the earth. But if we examine the discovery of Copernicus, we will see that it is no COMPLETE negation of the pre-Copernican viewpoint. For the pre-Copernican theory that the sun went round the earth, in so far as it refers to a RELATIONSHIP OF MOVEMENT between the sun and the earth, contained an element of truth. Copernicus developed this element of truth by pointing out that in regard to this relationship of movement, it is the earth which goes round the sun and not the sun which goes round the earth. Our mental faculties therefore, according to Dialectical Materialism, are capable of comprehending an increasing degree of objective truth.

Now, whether our knowledge of anything is correct or not can only be tested by putting such knowledge into actual practice. PRACTICE therefore, according to Dialectical Materialism, is the one criterion of the degree of accuracy of our knowledge. Dialectical Materialism therefore postulates "THE UNITY OF

THEORY AND PRACTICE" in our quest for knowledge. As an instance of practice proving the validity of our knowledge Engels instances the above-mentioned Copernican theory of the solar system. He says "For three hundred years the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis—. But when Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity for the existence of an unknown planet, BUT ALSO CALCULATED THE POSITION IN THE HEAVENS WHICH THIS PLANET MUST NECESSARILY OCCUPY AND WHEN GALLE REALLY FOUND THE PLANET (practice) the Copernican system was proved. As stated before, therefore, "Practice" is the criterion of truth, according to Dialectical Materialism. Through practice human knowledge becomes deeper and deeper, but our comprehension of objective truth in an absolute sense is never completed.

Engels finally deals with the last department of knowledge, the historical group of sciences. These deal with economic and social relationships which constitute social forms, and what is considered by Dialectical Materialism to be their ideological superstructure, such as ethics and morality. Unlike the previous department of knowledge dealing with living organisms, which, during historical times, have changed but little, in the social sciences, we are dealing with social forms which have undergone change much more conspicuously. As we have already pointed out, primitive communal society developed into slave society, slave society into feudal society and feudalism into capitalist society. There are no final and ultimate truths about social forms. Each form of society was the correct one in the historical

conditions in which it functioned, but no single one of these various social forms can claim a validity binding at all times and in all circumstances.

Engels, in his analysis of the social sciences, makes special mention of ETHICS AND MORALS, which, as we have seen, Dialectical Materialism considers to be the ideological superstructure of social forms giving social forms their stability. Dialectical Materialism points out that although ethics could make the least claim to final and ultimate truth, being the ideological superstructure of CHANGING social forms, yet, it is in regard to ethics that one encounters the most vociferous assertion of the existence of such final and ultimate truth. Nevertheless, ideas of right and wrong in society have varied from time to time, from epoch to epoch, and even from nation to nation. For example, the institution of the family, and the morality based on it, was unknown in the earlier forms of primitive communal society. Sexual intercourse between members of a particular clan was strictly prohibited, and sex relations were only permitted between members of one clan and another WITH NO PERMANENT RELATIONSHIP between the parties arising as a result. Today, society founds its morality on the institution of the family. Again, primitive communal society had hardly any notion of private property, and certainly no notion of the private and individual ownership of land. Today, in our capitalist society a whole code of morality has been founded on the institution of the private ownership of land. In ancient classical society, slavery was a recognised institution. The morality of that age was in perfect harmony with the idea that human beings should

be considered in the eyes of the law nothing more than chattels, and we also get the case of serfdom in feudal society, whereby public morality considered it justifiable that a section of the community should be legally bound to the land. Again, in feudal society the taking of interest on loans was generally considered anathema. But, when a stage was reached in social development when production came to be essentially based on credit facilities, as in the case of capitalist large scale production, the taking of interest ceased to have that opprobrium attached to it in medieval society.

Let us consider the taking of animal life for purposes of food. We know that in a Buddhist country the taking of animal life (not necessarily the eating of flesh as we shall see) is considered *Akusala* i.e. unwholesome or unethical, while in countries in the West the taking of such life does not produce any qualms of conscience. But, is this proof of the fact that the Buddhist East is more ethically developed than the Christian West or the Mohammedan Middle East, for that matter? Dialectical Materialism cannot accept such a point of view, for the truth seems to be that the difference in ethical outlook is influenced by environmental factors. An abundance of vegetation is to be found in South Eastern Asia, whereas in the Middle East and in the West, owing to climatic conditions, a vegetable diet, though possible, would have lacked the abundance and variety of such a diet in South Eastern Asia, especially before a large scale importation of food and also methods of refrigeration became possible. Whereas, therefore, environmental circumstances enabled an aversion to taking animal

life on ethical grounds, to originate in South Eastern Asia, and become an important feature of a great philosophical system, environmental conditions, in for instance the Middle East, which was the cradle of Christianity and Islam, operated against the development of any such aversion on the ground of ethics, to taking animal life.

Again, it can be pointed out that the acceptance of polygamy in Muslim countries, which is taboo in Christian society is also the product of environmental circumstances in this case social environment. For the people of Arabia (which was the birthplace of Islam) were, during the time of Mohammed, in an incessant state of warfare, and thus found themselves continually in a condition where the female population predominated over the male population. The only solution in the absence of avenues of female employment was polygamy, which, accordingly came to be a recognised institution in Islam. As ethical notions have a potentiality of their own, once they come into existence, they persist even if the social environment which brought them into existence wanes and disappears, provided they are not incompatible with new social conditions which have come into existence. Consequently, polygamy still prevails in most Islamic countries.

Ethical postulates, such as "thou shall not steal," may be considered to have had an application right down the ages. But, as pointed out by Dialectical Materialism, this is due to the fact that these postulates have in fact harmonised with the requirements of the various social forms which have developed throughout the centuries, but even then, their interpre-

tation and application have differed from age to age, and even from country to country. Take for instance, the postulate just mentioned, "Thou shall not steal" which seems to have been current down the centuries. It was only a particular kind of stealing incompatible with the stability of the social form in existence which public opinion condemned. For instance, slavery was in existence for centuries of recorded history. It was an important social institution in the classical age of Greece and Rome. But, so long as society was based on slavery, the obtaining of illgotten gain from the forced labour of slaves was never considered theft. Again serfdom, which bound labour to the land, was in actual practice but little different to slavery, but nevertheless feudal society gave it a legally recognised status. In fact, we are only now reaching a stage when public opinion is beginning to realise that the exploitation of labour in any form is objectionable, not merely on humanitarian grounds but also because such exploitation amounts to theft.

We have dealt with the relativity of the age-old maxim "thou shall not steal." Let us pass on to another postulate of age-old relevance "Thou shall not kill." A Dialectical Materialist points to the fact that just a century ago the death penalty was imposed for even common theft. The taking of human life by the law of the land for the most trivial offence, not to mention the forms of torture made use of, went without public comment. In fact it is interesting to note that penal reform has been more or less contemporaneous with the development of the productive resources of the human race, which

has lessened, but owing to the present frustration of productive capacity by the existing economic system, has not removed the NECESSITY for man to struggle against man for his existence.

Even today a justification of war implies that the postulate "thou shall not kill" needs to be restricted in interpretation and application.

Another indication of the relativity of this maxim "thou shall not kill" is, as already pointed out, the fact that the maxim does not, for instance in the West and in the Middle East, apply to the taking of animal life while environmental conditions in South Eastern Asia enabled such an extension of the application of this maxim, as for instance in Buddhist ethics. Buddhism however, it should be noted, permits one to eat the flesh of an animal killed unintentionally, or where the killing is not done by another for one's special purpose. But, even in the Buddhist East we do not come across the ethical notion "thou shall not kill" applying to vegetable LIFE, even though the transition from animal to vegetable life is so imperceptible that one cannot sometimes say whether a particular living specimen is a form of animal or vegetable life. Moreover, we now have the late Sir Jagadis Bose's epoch making discoveries in support of the view that even plants are possessed of a nervous system, and could therefore be capable of sensations. But, it is hardly likely that any system of ethics today which prohibits the taking of vegetable life on the basis of the precept "thou shall not kill" will even in the conditions of luxuriant vegetation of South Eastern Asia have any substantial support. For, just as much as in the West abstinence from

eating meat would until recently have been inconvenient owing to the absence of luxuriant conditions of vegetation, abstinence from the taking of vegetable life in addition to animal life in, say, Ceylon would under present circumstances, at any rate, restrict a vegetable diet very inconveniently to the eating of leaves and fruits etc.

However, the important thing to bear in mind is that ethical values of any influence are, according to Dialectical Materialism, RELATIVE to material environment particularly social environment. Ethical values can therefore change with changes or impending changes in the forms of society. Dialectical Materialism, as we have seen, postulates that the development of the factors of production i.e. development in the means whereby human beings carry on their productive activity causes changes in the economic relationships of human beings. Changes in economic relationships produce changes in social relationships i.e. new forms of society come into existence. These changes must have an effect on the ideological superstructure of society, namely in regard to ethics and morality. Dialectical Materialism, therefore, postulates that ethical values are never absolute and eternal in their applicability. So long as an ethical postulate serves a progressive social purpose, it should be scrupulously adhered to, but not because of a belief in its absolute value.

Dialectical Materialism maintains that man can play a very active part in changing his physical and social environment, just as much as physical environment and social form can mould him ethically and morally. One must not however underestimate the

potency of these ethical notions once they come into existence, for as we have already pointed out, Dialectical Materialism maintains that they often persist even after the physical environment and social form which brought them into existence disappear. If, of course, they are incompatible with the ideology of new social forms which have come into existence in the development of society, they usually wither away after a period of ideological conflict.

Now, what is the Buddhist viewpoint regarding this ethical problem we have just discussed in connection with Dialectical Materialism? Does Buddhism postulate for ethics an absolute or a relative value in the sense in which we have discussed the terms absolute and relative in connection with ethics? That the Eightfold Path does not lay down a hard and fast code of ethics of an imperative nature, seems to be indicated from the well known passage from the Kalama-Sutta where the Buddha says "Do not go merely by heresay or tradition, not by what has been handed down from olden times, not by rumours, not by mere reasoning and logical deductions, not by outward appearances, not by cherished opinions and speculations, not by mere possibilities, and do not believe me because I am your master. BUT WHEN YOU YOURSELF HAVE SEEN THAT A THING IS EVIL AND LEADS TO HARM AND SUFFERING THEN YOU SHOULD REJECT IT, AND WHEN YOU SEE THAT A THING IS GOOD AND BLAMELESS AND LEADS TO BLESSING AND WELFARE, THEN YOU SHOULD DO SUCH A THING ." Such an attitude in respect of ethical conduct can hardly be said to postulate a HARD AND FAST CODE OF ETHICS. Again, we have

a passage in the Majjhima Nikaya 1.415 where the Buddha advises his own son as follows "Is there a deed, Rahula, thou dost wish to do, then bethink thee thus : Is this deed conducive to my own harm, or to that of both, then is this deed a bad deed entailing suffering. Such a deed must thou surely not do." The highly individualistic method prescribed by the Buddha for determining ethical conduct seems to be incompatible with a blind obedience to an inflexible and stereotyped code of ethics.

But, what about Buddhism's abhorrence of the act of taking human and animal life ? Is this not an ethical position which Buddhism adopts independent of, say, any social or other environmental circumstances and admitting of no possible exception. Let us for the time being forget the theory that this prohibition against the taking of life is, though perhaps unconsciously, nevertheless motivated by social necessity in the case of human life, and that the Buddhist aversion to taking animal life was rendered possible owing to the abundance of vegetation in South Eastern Asia which was the birth place of Buddhism. Let us maintain that the prohibition against the taking of human and animal life is in Buddhism an absolute one, with no relationship to any environmental influences. Here then a divergence of opinion would seem to exist between Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism. This disparity of viewpoint would be due to a divergence between both systems of thought as to what constitutes the criterion of ethical conduct. According to Buddhism, our relationship with others should be based on Maitriya which is kindness, not merely to each and every human being but to all

sentient creatures. On the other hand the criterion of ethical conduct applied by Dialectical Materialism is SOCIAL GOOD. For, as we have already noted the merging of our interests in social good has the following invaluable advantages. (a) It is a means of realising the mental harmony of non-attachment through the merging of the ego in social welfare and social development. (b) As the preservation of the experience of the past and the pooling of contemporary knowledge necessitates social existence, society is a vital factor in the mental evolution of the human race. (c) Dialectical Materialism considers social environment to be a vital factor in determining the ethical condition of the vast majority of the human race. (d) Social existence is necessary for large-scale machine production, which when scientifically planned in a socialist economy will progressively reduce man's economic toil. So that not merely a few individuals, but all human beings will have increasing leisure for ethical, aesthetic and scientific development.

But, if the criterion of human behaviour according to Dialectical Materialism is social good, while the Buddhist ideal of ethical conduct is based on Maitriya, which means kindness to each and every SENTIENT creature whether a human being or a lower living organism, then a certain discrepancy in the matter of what constitutes ethical conduct seems to exist between Buddhism and Dialectical Materialism. For instance, dangerous snakes are a social menace as are rats which spread plague. Their extermination in as humane a manner as possible comes within Dialectical Materialism's criterion of right action namely social good.

Therefore, if the taking of animal life is necessary for the preservation or the improvement of human life, such action would be deemed justifiable by Dialectical Materialism, in as much as human life has much greater value to society than animal life, and as social good is the one criterion of ethical action recognised by Dialectical Materialism.

On the other hand, the ethics of Dialectical Materialism should condemn the WANTON taking of animal life *i.e.* for no social purpose, if as it seems, such wanton killing is a manifestation of sadism, of a frame of mind the culmination of which is a scant regard for even human life.

The taking of animal life, if socially necessary, is only a feature of a wider postulate of Dialectical Materialism that force is justified under the strictly limited conditions of social necessity. For, if social good is the criterion of ethical conduct, then the use of force, if socially necessary, would be justified according to Dialectical Materialism and would apply not merely to the animal world, but to human beings as well who behave anti-socially. Such force however must be the minimum necessary and must not last longer than required by social necessity. For Dialectical Materialism maintains that it is only by removing malefic environmental influences, particularly the malefic influences of social environment and the creation of harmonious social conditions could the ethical conduct of the great majority of the human race be rendered less and less acrimonious, and the conditions thereby established for the gradual elimination of force from human affairs.

Dialectical Materialism, therefore, as we have pointed out, permits the use of force in the restricted circumstances of social necessity. This viewpoint seems incompatible with Buddhism, if the Buddha Dhamma cannot condone the use of force in any circumstances, whether it involves the taking of life or a lesser degree of force. For the one criterion of ethics, according to Buddhism, is Maitriya or compassion for EACH AND EVERY SENTIENT BEING. But the matter may be viewed in this light. Granted that the use of force is a source of disharmony and demerit in any circumstances, which means that Akusala Kamma arises as a result. But the benefiting of society, if also involved in the process, must also be a source of substantial merit or Kusala Kamma, as social good benefits not merely one particular individual, but the overwhelming majority of the community. The whole process, therefore, it may be argued amounts to Akusala Kamma more than counterbalanced by Kusala Kamma. For instance, Dutugemunu of Lanka was able to found a great Buddhist kingdom and derive the substantial merit which according, to Buddhism, must have ensued from the propagation of Buddhism through his patronage, only by the use of force at the beginning of his career;—demeritorious conduct from the Buddhist point of view, but which rendered possible acts of inestimable merit subsequently. It may be possible by some such process of reasoning to bridge a seeming incompatibility between the ethical viewpoint of Buddhism with its manifestation of Maitriya to each and every sentient being and that of Dialectical Materialism which bases its whole ethical

position on the one criterion of social good and social development.

We have indicated the viewpoint of Dialectical Materialism and Buddhism on this very important topic of ethics. Dialectical Materialism we have pointed out denies the existence of absolute values in ethics. For, as already stated, Dialectical Materialism postulates that the factors of production which change and develop produce economic relationships among men for operating these factors of production. (These economic relationships in a class-stratified society are between those who own or largely control the means of production and those who do not exercise such ownership or control). Such economic relationships create social relationships, and on the foundation of these social relationships a superstructure of ethical values comes into existence. But, as the factors of production change and develop, economic relationships, social relationships and their superstructure of ethical values are all liable to change, and this is why Dialectical Materialism denies the existence of absolute values in ethics and morality. Its criterion of ethics is social good, and if a particular social form has outlived its social purpose and is detrimental to social existence and development, the morality which EXCLUSIVELY belongs to that social form has no justification to survive.

As regards Buddhism, we have pointed out that it is open to doubt whether the Buddhist ethical viewpoint is based on a foundation of ABSOLUTE values. But, we have indicated that even if Buddhism does postulate the existence of absolute values in

ethics, nevertheless the incompatibility of its position with that of Dialectical Materialism may be resolved by a consideration of the fact that the Akusala Kamma, which results from the infringement of an ethical absolute, may in certain circumstances be more than counterbalanced by the Kusala Kamma of social good ; for social good, by benefiting not only any one particular individual in society but almost every one, deserves a high degree of merit resulting from Maitriya.

